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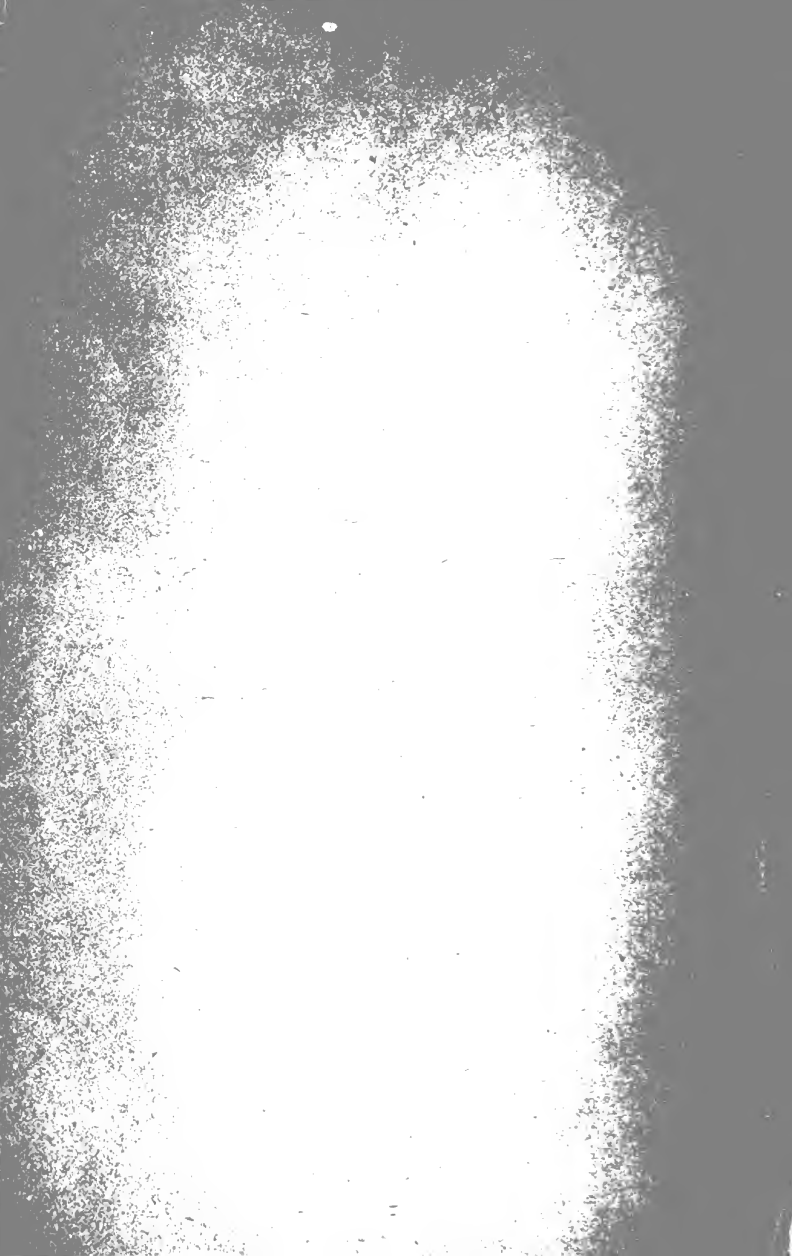
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THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

BY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM.

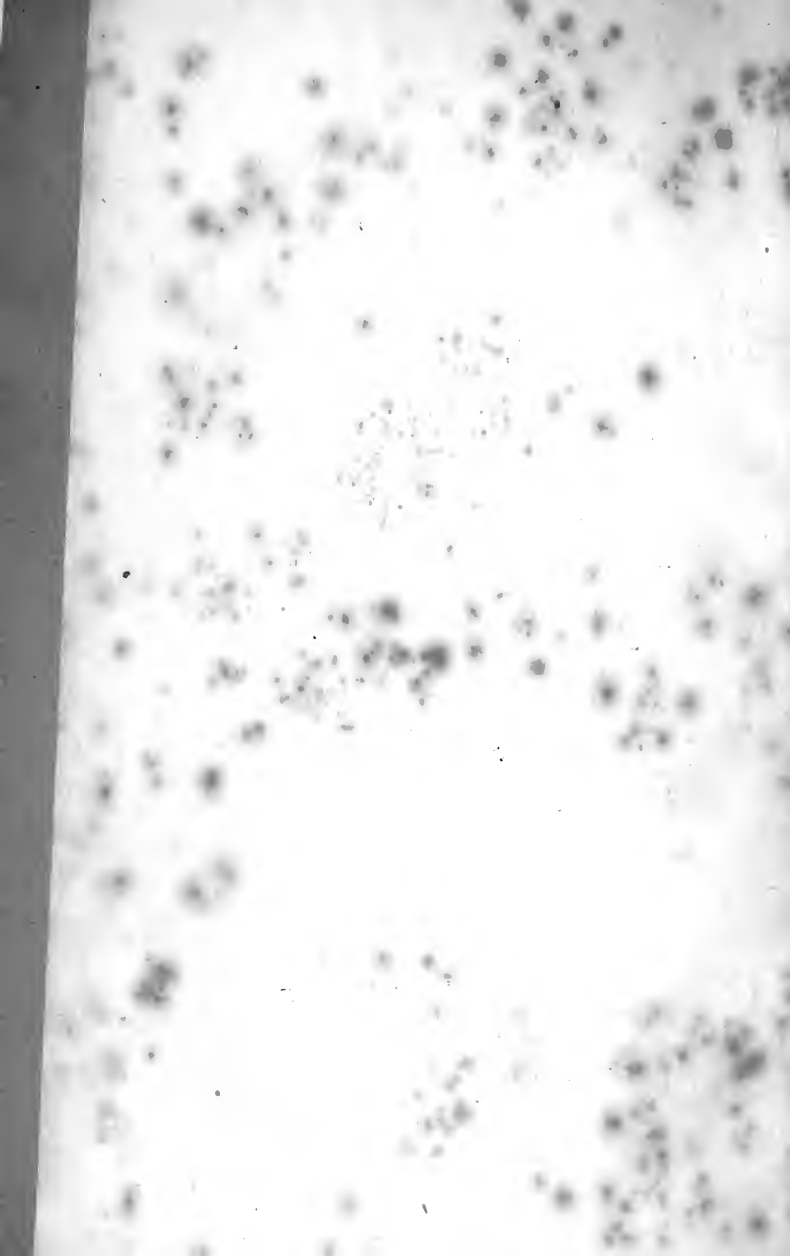
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1844.



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THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

CHAPTER I.

Citizen, a man of trade,—not a gentleman.—JOHNSON.

IN days not far distant from those in which we live, might be seen entering the Royal Exchange every day as the clock struck four, a tall thin man addicted to wearing powder, to walking with a huge stick, to a remarkable volubility of speech, and to the rather easily acquired habit of embodying in sentences of the most fearful length, the smallest possible portion of anything approaching to an idea. This gentleman was an Alderman of the City of London, a Liveryman of the Goldsmiths'

Company, a goldsmith by trade, a citizen by birth, and he had the happiness to rejoice in the name of *Clapperton*. The family of the Clappertons could not trace back its origin either to the time of William the Conqueror, or even to that of William and Mary, but it was satisfied with knowing that for the period of one hundred and twenty years there had never wanted a Clapperton on the rolls of the Goldsmiths' Company. Mr. Alderman Clapperton had passed through all the civic offices with, of course, *honour to himself, and glory to the Corporation*; and as a reward for distinguished merit, and as a just tribute to his well-earned fame, a benevolent and gracious monarch conferred on him the honour of baronetcy, and Sir Edward Clapperton became the founder of a new dynasty; upon which occasion he delivered himself of the following speech:—

“ I am *sure*, your Majesty, that your Majesty will do me the honour to remember that on the occasion when I had the privilege of waiting on your Majesty with the loyal and

dutiful address on your Majesty's accession to the throne of these realms,—which I am *sure* was one of the most bright and glorious days of my past life,—that I said to your Majesty, You may be *sure*, Sire, of the affection and devotion of your Majesty's most loyal citizens; your Majesty's noble and generous conduct on all possible occasions cannot fail to secure the affections of the most dutiful people in the world, when their affections are *surely* placed on any object. And in rendering my grateful thanks to your Majesty for the signal mark of royal benevolence now conferred on me, (and I am *sure* I may say conferred on the honourable Company to which I belong,) I am *sure* that I may express for that Company, as well as for myself, that anything it is in its power, or in my power to do, at any time, I am *sure* we shall be ready to do so at a moment's notice. I am *sure* your Majesty has a truly British heart, and I am *sure* your Majesty can appreciate our hearts, for we have all British hearts. Again, I repeat to your Majesty that never could a Monarch more *surely* rely on his faith-

ful subjects, the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, than you can, I am sure."

This was one of the most eloquent orations of Sir Edward; and his family hoped that the Goldsmiths' Company would have it "framed and glazed,"—but in this noble devotedness of feeling the Master and Wardens did not fully participate, and the speech was simply copied on vellum, emblazoned with the arms of the Clapperton family, and hung up in the large dining room on Clapham Common.

This was the origin of the Clappertons. Sir Edward, when only a goldsmith, and less sure of his future fame, had the misfortune to marry a most worthy and admirable woman, who could not understand what it was to rise in the world, and who was guilty of occasional *faux pas*, such as asking the gentleman who sat next her at dinner to take wine with her, of being "remarkably fond of long whist and sixpenny points," of having a predilection for very gay caps and a profusion of flowers, and of directing the conversation, even when she lived westward, to city politics and city gossip.

All this sadly grieved both Sir Edward and his daughters, and the only son felt it by no means improbable, that these maternal tastes and habits would stand in the way of all their future preferment. Lady Clapperton remained deaf to all these remonstrances, reproved the “pride” of her “stuck-up husband and children,” and as she wore low bodies and gauze handkerchiefs would declare that for her part there was nothing like nature.

“Blessed is the man who hath a lady for his mother,” exclaimed her refractory but only son.

“Then you are blessed, indeed,” retorted his obtuse parent; and delighted with what she mistook for a well-merited compliment, she added, “That which is born in the bones is sure to come out in the flesh, Ned. I remember very well, my poor dear father used to say, as he took me on his knees and looked at my bright blue eyes, and gazed on my fine flowing locks,—‘Betsy, my girl, you’ll make your way in the world; for you have the very look of a queen!’ and though your dear

mother is not a queen, my boy," continued Lady Clapperton, "she is a lady in her own right now; for if your father should die to-morrow, I should be Lady Clapperton the rest of my days. I always said to your father, when he first put up to be common-councilman for the Ward of Cheap,—‘Clapperton,’ said I, ‘this is the first step,—mind what you’re about,—and if my father’s word does not come true to the letter, it will to the spirit.’ And now so it has; for am I not Lady Clapperton? And the best of it is, my boy, that you will be Sir Edward Clapperton, and your wife Lady Clapperton, when we shall be *smouldering* in the grave. None of your knighthoods for me; but Sir Edward once, Sir Edward for ever; and Lady once, Lady for ever. That’s my way of thinking.”

This was Lady Clapperton; but she had her merits. Her plate was kept in a chest, and the key in her pocket. Her store-room was well ventilated, and not less well supplied with the comforts and luxuries of the table; and that key also was kept in her

pocket. The wine-cellar was not confided either to her husband or his butler. She flattered herself that Dr. Henderson was not a better connoisseur of claret, hock, champagne, Lisbon, port, or sherry, than herself; and as to her East India madeira, “the King’s or Kaye’s cellars had not the parallel.” Her favourite newspaper was *The Morning Post*. She was also very learned in Leadenhall-street literature; and was herself, not a walking Encyclopædia, but an ambulating cookery-book. Simple, generous, round, affable, red, and jovial, she was the charm of a dinner-table at her own house, and precisely the reverse at any other residence. There were some points, either in her character or her arrangements, on which she was entitled to pride herself. They were not her eloquence, her wit, her education, her high bearing, noble mien, commanding talents, or pungent satire; but her white currant wine, which she “backed” against any liqueur on the Continent, her boar’s-head, once a-year, which she imported from *Chevet’s*, and her *caviare* and cranberries,

which were equally perfect at Clapham Hall. Nor should her biographer omit to record that her "Westphalia Hams" were wonderful, and that her hospitality was prodigious. Her chief defects were a pertinacious love of the letter W, in the case of veal, a grape vine, victualling-office, and even vinegar; the first and last of which cases were the most distressing, as dinner was a daily occurrence, and veal and vinegar were very often two of its condiments. This was her first defect. An awful misapprehension of the rules laid down by Dilworth, Lindley Murray, and other orthodox and polite authorities, for the pronunciation of the letter H. She was unfortunate in her struggles to do right, and spoke with "esitation" of the "air" of her "edd." There was a third defect, which ought to be nameless, a love of luncheons. To those who protested against such antiquated and exploded repasts, she would reply, "Now, do you suppose, sir, that I would let these poor things (the poor things being her two daughters) go without anything to eat from ten in the morning till

six at night? No, no! In *my* opinion, a good warm luncheon is the best meal in the day. Poor, dear Sir Charles Stilton used to say, the Duke of Y——, who was as good a man as ever broke bread, and who took his wine freely, was a great lover of luncheons. And the Alderman himself was no bad judge, I assure you. So, with such examples before us, we must not give up our luncheons.”

This was Lady Clapperton. She was kind-hearted, generous, and charitable, warmly attached to her friends, and easily persuaded into a friendship; but those who visited her for any lengthened period ran two great chances, the first of their hearing, and the second of their digestion. If these were of no consequence, Clapham Hall was a princely residence. But as all that's bright must fade, poor Lady Clapperton took to dying. Her indisposition was short but severe. Feeling “quite out of sorts the previous night” — we are simply transcribers of her own eloquent narrative to the medical attendant,—“she was prevailed on to take a large tumbler of hot arrack-

punch. This had the effect of giving her a good night's sleep: and when she awoke she thought she was better. She rose, but felt weak. Sir Edward advised her to try a venison cutlet and a few glasses of the best East India madeira. But she had scarcely finished her luncheon than she felt very drowsy. She remembered no more." An apoplectic attack had seized her; and though, for a few hours, she was restored to a perfect apprehension of her situation, a second attack conveyed her to that bourn from which no traveller returns. The daughters mourned her loss, the son shed bitter tears over her grave, Sir Edward directed the most expensive funeral that could be imagined to be prepared, and the funeral breakfast was nearly as pompous as a Lord Mayor's feast. Lady Clapperton, adieu!

The Miss Clappertons were ladies of a very different mould to their defunct mamma. Miss Charlotte was the eldest — her junior sister was Miss Sophia. The former had received her education at a boarding-school on that very common, where now Sir Edward pos-

sessed his hall; and the youngest child, and the favourite too, had been so happy as to enjoy the advantages of a private education, having private masters, and a private governess. Miss Charlotte was fair, pale, and flaxen, rather addicted in her earlier days to a love of city royalty, but still knew all the rules in Wanostrocht's French Grammar, could talk a few words of Italian to the "broom-girls," and the "white mice boys," and had seen more of the world than her sister, for she had taken two trips to Boulogne. Miss Sophia was a brunette, resembled neither father nor mother, a circumstance which much annoyed Sir Edward and his lady, had a strong voice, which she exercised in the bravura style, looked remarkably well with harp-strings in her fingers, or with her fingers on harp-strings; whilst her eldest sister played with her ringlets, and was quite *au fait* at Hertz's piano compositions, as well as an ardent lover of Meyerbeer. Both the Miss Clappertons sang — both required a good deal of pressing — both sang when pressed — and blessed was

the wight who got off without two hours of performances, when once the Miss Clappertons were fairly installed before their piano.

During the life-time of their mamma their favourite topic of conversation was "their aversion to vulgarity," but after her jocund face and merry heart no longer enlivened their Clapham mansion, they took to novels and the Belles Lettres. Accustomed to the civic virtue of profusion, they treated their minds as their departed mamma had done their bodies, and belonged to *four* circulating libraries,—one in the country, and three in town,—to the first class of books at each library, in order that they might have an abundant supply of mental food for their craving appetites. Their groom was often oppressed by the weight of four and five sets of the last three-volumed novels, and their lady's-maid was "really afraid lest the young ladies should throw themselves into a consumption by so much hard reading." The current literature of the day was soon insufficient in quantity for their impatient and eager souls, and in their thirst

for knowledge the Waverley novels were passed in such rapid review, that the Miss Clappertons even forgot the names of the tales, if not of the author. When the Scotch novels were terminated, they began with Fielding, Smollett, and Richardson, and kept up a sort of amiable and sisterly contest about who could read the quickest, and *not* who could understand the best. How long this state of things might have continued, or to what fearful results it might have conducted, it is impossible to imagine, but an event to which we shall presently refer changed once more the current of their thoughts, as well as the whole plan of their existence. But before we make any further allusion to that circumstance, we must attempt a sketch of the only son. It is still but an act of justice to record that the Miss Clappertons were really very nice girls.

Edward Clapperton, Esquire, was the hope of the family. He it was who was to transmit the name of Clapperton to the next generation, and by it to the end of time. Good-

tempered, not very strong-minded, easily led into all fun or mischief, really averse to business, fond of amusements, yet social, generous, and unsuspecting, he received a good education at the Charter House, only afterwards to become a — goldsmith. Yet, as he was high-principled, dutiful, and possessed a great love, if not of fame, at least of reputation, he attended to business, that the credit of the house might stand high, and that his own credit with his own bankers might not fall low. Civic honours in his heart he despised, but until the creation of a Baronetcy in his family he had no prospect of any other. That event, however, changed all his expectations and plans, and opened before him a wide field for speculation and hope. He was too frankly good to desire the death of his father, but it was a consolation to him to know that at some period or other of his future life he should be Sir Edward too, and Maria Catherwood, the daughter of a respectable though not very opulent founder, he then hoped would rise with him to the higher

circles of society, and to the style, if not the grandeur of the great.

Maria was a pet lamb. Gentle, unassuming, infantine, modest, graceful, playful, and young, she was the darling of her father's heart, and the hope of her mother's life. Her tastes were as simple as her acquirements were feminine, and there was an innocent artlessness about her, which gained for her none but names of tenderness and feelings of interest. At the age of seventeen her slender form appeared rather to whisper like the zephyrs than to tread along the ground, and Maria Catherwood was too pure a creature for most men to love, and yet so interesting and fascinating that but few could think of her with indifference. Yet, though her frame was slender, her heart was strong, her affections ardent, and her friendships enthusiastic ; and she would blush most deeply when Edward Clapperton was mentioned, long before he had made any declaration of affection, or even of esteem. "He is a fine-hearted fellow !" said Maria, when she heard him accused of avarice ; "there is not

an atom of that vice in his character, or I am indeed mistaken. Who has not his faults? Edward Clapperton may have his, and I doubt not he has many, but he is much more likely to err on the side of generosity and extravagance, than on that of avarice or meanness."

Alderman and Mrs. Clapperton loved Maria as they would have done a pretty flower, a sweet dove, a tender plant; but they never thought of her as their child, for they knew that her father was far from wealthy, and they hoped that their son Edward "would look much higher." When the title made its appearance in the Clapperton family, even Lady Clapperton, with all her good-heartedness, "trusted that her son would forget his boyish loves," and seek for some one more in accordance with the change which had thus come over the spirit of their dreams. The Miss Clappertons loved Maria with sisterly affection, but regarded the *penchant* of their brother for "the little creature" as a dreaming recollection of bygone days; and when their father was created Sir Edward they dismissed the idea of

even the possibility of such a marriage wholly from their minds. Edward Clapperton himself had his doubts and misgivings. The declaration of his attachment to Maria he had made when only nineteen years of age; she had postponed any definitive answer, and bade him wait awhile, to be sure that the proposal would not lead to any family disunion, though, at the same time, she allowed him to feel that to her he was by no means disagreeable. The death of Lady Clapperton suspended for a short period the intimacy of the two families; Maria was less frequently at Clapham Hall; neither Sir Edward nor his daughters felt any longer any uneasiness, and they all hoped that the friendship of boyhood would remain unchanged in future and coming years, and that it would continue of that character, which to them would be most acceptable, especially as the Catherwood family was more virtuous than wealthy.

“Troubles never come alone,” says the proverb; and this was undoubtedly the case with the Clappertons; for six months after the death

of their mamma, Sir Edward descended suddenly to the same vault as his departed spouse, and the escutcheon, with "Resurgam" beneath it, adorned or beshrouded the front of Clapham Hall. The Court of Aldermen followed their defunct member to the grave, and passed a vote of condolence to his son, whilst a deputation of the livery of the Ward of Cheap, a few weeks afterwards, invited young Sir Edward to become candidate for the post of Common Councilman. But he had far different plans in view ; they dreamt not of the things of heaven and earth which had entered into his philosophy ; for he had resolved to give up business, sell off the stock in trade, get rid of the good-will, and realise the large fortune of his father ; and as Sir Edward had died without any will, to take possession of the freehold estates, divide the personal property with his sisters, and live "like a gentleman" at the family mansion.

"No more vulgarities for me !" said Sir Edward ; "no more turtle dinners at Greenwich or gilded boat excursions to Richmond.

No more making love to aldermen's wives or to common-councilmen's daughters; no more Easter balls or lord mayor's feasts! no more canvassings for poor liverymen who seek to be bridge-masters; and no more tormentings for 'votes and interest' in orphan asylums, or by ward officers, or for Christ's Hospital! Thank God! it was the title of Sir Edward and Baronet that were transmissible, and not those of alderman or liveryman. I am Sir Edward Clapperton, of Clapham Hall in the county of Surrey, Baronet; with a good house, fine fortune, capital estates, large personal property, excellent constitution, admirable health, not a bad figure, gentlemanly appearance, engaging manners, and all that sort of thing; and with two very decent sisters, who can keep house, and look well, play, sing, go to the Opera, be presented at court, and cut a figure in that kind of world for which my poor dear father and mother — God bless them both! — were really anything but qualified. Dear Maria must wait awhile. Her advice was excellent; full of sense; though I did not think so *then*;

I am glad she gave it, now. I must sow my wild oats before I think of marriage; and become steady, before settling down. Politics, dear politics, I must now attend to them;—not your city politics, your Guildhall politics, your Mansion-House politics; oh, no! but the Carlton Club politics; politics of St. Stephen's Chapel, gentlemanly politics. I must become what my dear father never could be made—it was not in him—a man of the world. To be sure, I am very young to become such; but a man at twenty-three is a man for all that.”

The Miss Clappertons learnt with delight the determination of their brother. They abhorred trade; the eldest, since she took to reading, daily diminished in her previous demi-attachment to the city and its interests; the aversion of the youngest increased; the Ward of Cheap was never visited by either of them; and they gave their hearty concurrence to all such arrangements as should withdraw their brother, Sir Edward, from all City connexions, and place him in that world of which they had heard so much and seen

so little,—the *beau monde*. It was true that Mrs. Graham had introduced them to dukes and marchionesses at Baker Street, and that Doctor Colton, of Pall Mall East, had done his *little best* to initiate Sir Edward into the secrets of the West End;—but they all longed to bask in the sunshine of the *haute ton*: to have their movements noticed in the Court Journal; to see their names arranged in alphabetical order with the rest of the authorised and recognised aristocracy; to be introduced at court; to see their court dresses amply described in the columns of The Morning Post; and to become part and parcel of the *élite* of the land,

Sir Edward disposed of the business in the City for a very large sum, made all the arrangements which duty and honour dictated as to the fortunes of his sisters, and then resolved to spend with them the winter at Bath. He knew not how the mighty Bath of former days had fallen.

“A prophet hath no honour in his own country,” said Sir Edward to his sisters;

“we will come out at Bath. There we will live in splendour and taste, become acquainted with the rank, fashion, and beauty of that orthodox watering-place, then be introduced at court in the spring, spend our next summer in London, autumn at Baden, and winter at Paris, and finally settle down at Clapham Hall after introductions to the English, Baden, and French courts, and select our society, as well as arrange our future plans.”

“Admirable!” said Miss Charlotte.

“Delicious!” said Miss Sophia; and each looked on her brother as a prodigy both of talent and genius.

This is a sketch of the Clapperton family. How those plans were executed or abandoned, and the consequences to which they led, will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

He is a *racaille*; i. e. a loose, *disorderly*, *wild*, *gay* man; addicted to pleasure.

Old Play.

AMONGST the amiable nothingnesses which made up the character of the founder of the Clapperton family, was a perfect indifference to politics. The first Sir Edward would say, "that he was sure he owed all his advancement and all his wealth, to his never having been drawn into party politics. For his part, he thought there were good and bad of all sorts. No men were more worthy of love than Sir William Turtle or Sir Charles Stilton, and yet they were *Tories*. Mr. Alderman Black and Sir Jonathan Webb were admitted to be two of the most upright men in the Corporation; and they were *Whigs*. And Mr. Alderman Tin

and Mr. Alderman Rice were two of the most efficient members of the Court of Aldermen; and yet they were *Radicals*. He had also observed during the whole of his civic life, that however politics divided men at contested elections, and when the question of ‘*who?*’ should eat the loaves and fishes was at issue, when once that point was decided and the eating commenced, they were unanimous in their proceedings, and loved each other as brethren. So, to avoid all strife, and secure peace for himself as well as respect and happiness for his family, he had commenced public life with this resolution,—never to oppose any man on account of his politics, nor any proposition when apparently good in itself, because it was brought forward by any political party, whether high-church or low-church, church and state, or no church and no state at all.”

This was the only feature in his father’s character that the young Sir Edward could *not* approve.

“To be anything in the upper classes,” said Sir Edward to his sisters, “men must be some-

thing in politics. Our poor, dear father never could understand this; and perhaps it was well that he could not,—for, by his obliging manners towards all parties, and his support of all in their turns, he secured so large a business and made so ample a fortune. But my position is far different. My fortune is made. My title I have not to seek. Commerce I have done with for ever! I will never see the City, except it be to canvass the worthy liverymen for the honour of representing them in parliament, and this I can never do without an avowal of principles. For my part, I care not two straws who are in power, the Whigs or the Tories, but I must be one or the other. To be a Radical, unless I were one of the chiefs, like Sir William Coldsfoot, would exclude you, as well as myself, from very much of the best society, especially as our origin will always be looked to, unless we are patronized by some of the old families of the country. But whether I side with the Tories or the Whigs I am perfectly indifferent; for when Whigs are in office they are Tories, and when

Tories are out of office they are Whigs. To one or the other of these sections I must belong; and as we have some expectations from Mr. Mapleton and his cousins, who are both Tories to the backbone, I think it would be but wise and prudent on my part, to avow Tory and church principles."

"I think so too, my dear Edward," said Sophia, "especially as the Tories are in power, and we can never hope to get on in the world until presented at Court."

"Oh, as for that, my dear Sophia," replied Sir Edward, "the Tories are a good-natured set of fellows when in office, and are always more obliging to the Whigs who oppose, than to the Tories who support them. Their maxim is, that it is better to neutralize one opponent, than to render more solid ten friendships of their own party. I am not as yet sufficiently acquainted with these matters to offer any decided opinion on such a question; but I rather think some moderate Tories have become Whigs, of late, not merely from the conviction that the Whigs ere long will take office, but because

they see clearly that nothing is to be got out of any ministry which has the Duke for its head. The Duke is too honest and straightforward a man for a *premier*; and, besides which, he has gained his reputation, can never hope to be more popular than he is at present, and has nothing to aspire to. On the whole, I am satisfied it is my duty to belong to his party, especially as I have no favour to ask, and no frowns to fear. If I enter parliament, I should take my seat behind Sir Robert, and give my independent support to a Church and State cabinet."

"As to church matters, my dear Edward," said Charlotte, "I think you need not trouble your head about such affairs. Leave the church to the clergy and the bishops. They know what's best; and as some of our old friends are Unitarian dissenters, I should be sorry to see *you* take any part in anything relating to the church. For my part I think one religion as good as another, provided we are but sincere in our belief."

"Why, where have you been reading such

trash as that?" asked Sir Edward, with a wholly unaccustomed energy; "I pray you banish from your mind such absurd and preposterous notions. The religion of this country is that of the Established Church, and we belong to it. How can you hope to be presented at Court, mix with the best society, and be on an equality with the oldest families in the country, and yet hold that your Methodists and your Dissenters are on an equality with Churchmen? Why, really, Charlotte, if such opinions are held by you, let me conjure you, as your best friend and protector, never to broach them. If it were known that such sentiments were entertained by any of the Clapperton family, farewell to all my plans, hopes, and prospects."

"But I thought," replied Charlotte, "that the highest circles of society held precisely these opinions; and that the Marchioness of Swanshire, and the Countess of Hartwell, and the Duchess of Marblehall were as indifferent on these matters, as that ice-plant or this egg-cup."

“That is precisely your error,” said Sir Edward; “they are indifferent, if you will, to the forms and ceremonies, to the rites and church-goings of religion, but they would rather die than appear in a conventicle, and would rather be taken up for shop-lifting, than accused in the public journals of favouring Methodism. It is not that they are religious, or care about religion, but they must belong to the National Church.”

“I understand Edward perfectly,” said Sophia, turning to Charlotte and regarding her with a look of some anxiety as well as interest; “his maxim is, think what you like, believe internally what you will; but as every other religion but that of the Church is looked upon as vulgar and ungentlemanly, never say anything about Dissenters or Methodists. Appear before the world as if you knew nothing about them. Never either defend their cause, or reproach them; go to Church; stand well with your parish clergyman; and, if ever appealed to on such matters, say that you leave all these questions to the gentlemen, since ladies

have something else to do than to trouble themselves about church or state."

"Admirable!" exclaimed Sir Edward. "That is indeed what may be called *multum in parvo*."

"What do you say, Edward? *Multum*—" asked Charlotte.

"Oh! it's only a Latin phrase, signifying 'much in a little,' my dear; but never ask these questions before others. I know *very little* of Latin myself; for what I learned at the Charter-house I have nearly forgotten, but I make it a rule never to ask questions. You *may* know, or you may *not* know, so long as you ask no questions; and no one can tell to which description of characters you belong; but the moment the question is asked, it is clear you do *not* know,—and then you are set down for a dunce. Take my advice, Charlotte; never ask any questions. Laugh when others laugh,—and look grave when others look grave; and, independent of the fact, that this will secure you a vast many friends, be sure it will save you from many troubles."

“By the bye,” — continued Sir Edward, “my dear girls, we must now think very seriously of our arrangements for Bath. I have thought of Cheltenham, Leamington, Hastings, and Brighton; but you must have observed in the course of your reading, that in all the best novels Bath carries the bell. They tell me it’s dull, prosy, and old-fashioned; but it’s better for us, who are now coming out for the first time, to go to an old-fashioned than to a more modern watering-place. When once we shall be fairly started, we may do as we please; but it will look much better among the fashionable departures of the Post to have it recorded,—‘Sir Edward Clapperton and the Miss Clappertons, his sisters, from Clapham Hall for Bath, where they propose spending the next three months,’ than to have Hastings, Brighton, or indeed any other place inserted in its stead. I shall go down quite incog, by the mail, to make all preparatory arrangements, shall select the very best House still unlet in the city; and, as nearly twelve months have elapsed since the death of our poor dear father, there will no longer be any

reasons either of delicacy or affection to prevent our appearing in public, and making that display which the family title and fortune fully authorise."

The Miss Clappertons fully concurred in all the plans of their "admired" and "astonishing" brother; and a few days afterwards Sir Edward Clapperton started for Bath.

That no chance of producing an effect might be thrown away, Sir Edward wrote previously to the proprietor of the York House, announcing his intended arrival, and directing rooms to be prepared for his reception. A new travelling portmanteau, with a silver plate at the top, and the arms of the Clapperton family engraved on it, as well as the name of "Sir Edward Clapperton, Baronet," beneath the arms, was his only companion; and when the next morning he descended from the mail-coach, he found a suite of rooms in the most perfect order, and every delicacy and luxury which nature could supply or art could offer, placed at his disposal. The proprietor of the York Hotel knew well the *genus* to

which Sir Edward belonged. "Money was no object." Whilst an old nobleman, with three centuries of heraldry to back him, would take his carpet-bag into the coffee-room, unburthen himself of his tog-roggery, call for tea and a muffin, and think himself well served, the Clapperton race bespeak a suite of rooms for a single man, and take tea, coffee, chocolate, wine, liqueurs, broiled salmon, potted wheat-ears, Yarmouth bloaters, *cotelettes à la Maintenon*, and an *épigramme d'agneau aux points d'asperges*, for even an early breakfast. These are the sort of persons who make the fortune of an hotel-keeper; and no wonder, therefore, that the master of the York was up and waiting, even at a somewhat early hour in a December morning.

Sir Edward was delighted with the "York." He had magnificent rooms on the first-floor, lounged on the Ottomans, feasted on *hors-d'œuvres*, admired all, praised everything, and, after refreshing himself with a bath, a barber, a newspaper, and a stroll of two hours, wrote to his sisters as follows:—

“DEAR GIRLS,

“This is charming. I slept all night in the mail, except when some City man, with whose face I was not wholly unacquainted, disturbed me by his commercial observations, and his road-side stories. Arrived at seven. Found the ‘York’ perfection. Bath delicious. Barber, a perfect master of the ceremonies. Breakfast,—nothing superior, I should think, out of Paris. The Abbey very fine. The King’s, Queen’s, and new private baths, admirable; but the great Pump-room,—delicious. Milsom and Bond Streets are most inviting; the parades, the crescents, Sydney Gardens,—but, above all,—the Pump-room! This is the queen of cities. A great poet has written,

‘Of all the gay places the world can afford,
By gentle and simple for pastime adored,
Fine balls, and fine concerts, fine buildings and springs,
Fine walks and fine views, and a thousand fine things,
In manners, in dress, in politeness to shine,
O Bath! let the art, let the glory be thine!’

“I have seen an inscription to the memory of a lady, which I have copied, just changing

the name, as applicable to our departed mother, and propose that it should replace the very unsatisfactory tablet now erected to commemorate her virtues and her fame.

‘ In memory of Lady Sarah Clapperton,
Consort of Sir Edward Clapperton, Baronet,
of Clapham Hall, in the
County of Surrey ;
Born June 4, 1773.

Deceased January 11, 1827.

For more than twenty-four years wife and consort
to Sir Edward,

who never saw her once ruffled with anger,
or heard her utter even a peevish word ;
whether pained or injured, the same good woman,
in whose mouth, as in whose character,
was no contradiction.

Resigned, generous, affable, hospitable ;
without passion, though not without sense,
she took offence as little as she gave it ;
she never was, nor made, an enemy.

To servants mild ; to her children kind ;
to her guests hospitable ; to the poor charitable.

Always caring how to please Sir Edward,
yet not less attentive to her duties as a Christian.
How few will be able to equal, what all should endeavour
to imitate !’

“ If you approve of this inscription, I will attend to its execution on my arrival in London.

“But now, to change the scene, how shall
I describe the great Pump-room ?

‘Ods-bobs ! how delighted I was unawares,
With the fiddler I heard in the room above stairs ;
For music is wholesome, the doctors all think,
For ladies that bathe and for ladies that drink.’

“There they were, even at ten in the morning,
dear creatures, young and old, smiling
and frowning, drinking and walking, whilst at
the King’s Bath and Cross Bath,

‘You cannot conceive what a number of ladies
Were wash’d in the water the same as our “Tray” is ;
How the ladies did giggle and set up their clacks
All the while an old woman was rubbing their backs.
Oh ! ’twas charming to see them all put on their flannels,
And then take the water like so many spaniels.
And tho’ all the while it grew hotter and hotter,
They swam just as if they were hunting an otter.’

“For Bath is the region, believe it, dear
girls,—yes, Bath is the region to keep soul
and body alive. Adieu ! Ever your affectionate brother,

“EDWARD.

“P. S.—Do not expect me till I arrive.”

Sir Edward roamed and rode day after day in every direction, from the York House to the Literary Society—from the south wing of Sydney Place to the Freemasons' Hall—from Portland Place to the Circus—from Milsom Street to the Ferry—from Upper Camden Place to the Royal Crescent—from High Street to the Queen's House—from Great Pulteney Street to Prospect Place—from Grosvenor Place even to Pickwick and Corsham House; examining all houses, lodgings, and accommodations; but at last decided in favour of the centre of active life and fashionable bustle,—Milsom Street, and hired for the season the best house in this very *magnet* of the city, this pulse of Bath movement.

“The beaux in Milsom Street, who sought renown,
By *walking* up, in order to *walk* down!”

Sir Edward was rather early in his arrangements, but he regretted this the less as it afforded him the advantage of choice; and the residence he selected was regarded as decidedly

one of the very best in the whole city. He was delighted to find that the entertainments for visitors were as various as they were numerous, and that what he had been told by an old visitor was true, that

“ ’Twas amazing they found such a number of ways
Of employing his thoughts all the time that he stays.”

That his intended arrival might be no secret, Sir Edward subscribed to the assembly-rooms, public library, literary, philosophical, and even charitable institutions, giving cheques on Drummond’s with *nonchalance* and affability, and requesting every one to whom he spoke, and especially the Master of the Ceremonies, on no account to allow him to omit any duty or subscription which was customary on the part of the nobility or gentry.

When Sir Edward had terminated to his entire satisfaction these preparatory arrangements, he directed the waiter to secure him a place by the York House coach to London, and left, for a few days, this paragon of cities.

There were two other inside passengers. The first was Miss Appleton, who, as the head milliner of the place, was proceeding to London to receive her last arrivals, in the shape of fashions and fineries from *Herbault's*; and who was said to be, by good judges, one of the prettiest women in Bath. The other passenger was Lord Swainton, of whom, and of whose proceedings, we shall at least attempt a description.

Lord Swainton was of middling stature, with a large head, not wholly bald, but partially covered with greyish hair, with small light eyes, an amazing mouth, immense ears, a hat which nearly covered his eyebrows, brown leather gloves, with holes in them, a blue dress-coat with gilt buttons, a yellow kerseymere waistcoat, and pantaloons, which hung in loose drapery over his bony and somewhat shrunken limbs. He had a nervous action of the shoulders, the result of a perpetual state of incredible excitement, and a facility in conversation which was truly appalling; possess-

ing a title without an estate, and great conversational talents, unaccompanied by any very burdensome amount of principle, he astonished the ignorant, deceived the unwary, and even baffled those who set themselves up as tolerably good judges of human nature. What he lacked in fortune he made up in wit ; and as he believed with Talleyrand, that speech was given to man to assist him in cajoling others, he acted on the principle he adopted, and found that few were those who could resist his startling propositions, or his extraordinary pretensions. Lord Swainton, at the period of which we write, was about fifty-five years of age. He admitted only forty-five when a pretty woman was present ; but ten years more when it became necessary for him to appeal to his age and experience in confirmation of the truth of some very novel and unbelievable dogma. Possessing but a very small income, and indulging in expensive habits, he relied a good deal on the “ Ace of Diamonds ” and the “ King of Hearts.” Amongst the various characteristics, combinations, and attributes which united

to form his *tout ensemble*, there was one more than the rest which puzzled those who thought and spoke of him, and that was, that though his pockets were empty, his appetite prodigious, and his private table expensive, yet that he talked incessantly as though to increase the demand of his animal nature for supply ; whereas prudence should have dictated to him rather the husbanding than the throwing away of his resources. He was the greatest talker in Europe, and the poorest peer of England. Well acquainted with Bath society, possessed of a quantum of assurance almost inconceivable, and ever ready to avail himself of every circumstance which could promote his own daily interests by administering to his daily wants ; the intended arrival of Sir Edward Clapperton and his sisters for the season, the temporary stay of the former at the “ York,” his approaching return to London, and even the hour of his departure, were known in all their order of time to this watcher for golden opportunities ; and his visit to the metropolis in the same coach which conveyed

Sir Edward, was an event neither accidental nor singular.

“I think we had better cross legs, Sir Edward Clapperton,” said Lord Swainton; “nothing like making oneself comfortable in these public vehicles, eh, Sir Edward? I know you are not accustomed to this kind of travelling. Beggars description!”

Sir Edward blushed. “How could he be known? Who was this old-clothes-man-looking sort of person that addressed him with so much of familiarity, though respect?”

“With whom have I the honour of travelling?” asked Sir Edward, with a voice between surprise and diffidence.

“Oh! nobody — nobody, merely Lord Swainton of Swainton; every one knows me at Bath, member of the Upper House, well-known at the Carlton, Brookes’s, the Athenæum, United Service, and University. Jack of all trades, and master of none. He! he! he! a great talker and a small wit; but twenty years ago (addressing himself to his fair and opposite companion) an adorer of your sex,

Mademoiselle, and a tolerably fortunate one too, for my girls laugh at me sometimes, and say, ‘my lord, you have broken more hearts than you have banks.’ He! he! he! Beggars description!”

“Lord Swainton of Swainton,” thought Sir Edward, “this *is* fortunate. He says he is well known at Bath; a peer of the realm; no doubt a wealthy and eccentric nobleman; can tell me everything I want to know; perhaps introduce me to Bath society; this *is* lucky; I wonder whether he is a Tory.”

“Your lordship, I believe, belongs to the Conservative interest.”

Lord Swainton hesitated an instant, for he was full of care not to offend Sir Edward’s prejudices, if he had any; since, although he had discovered all that related to the fortune and origin of the Clapperton family before he secured his place at the York to travel with Sir Edward, he had not been able to find out anything relating to their politics; so, without answering the inquiry, he dexterously replied,

“ Sir Edward, doubtless, is of that great party ? ”

“ Unquestionably,” said Sir Edward ; and as Lord Swainton had now obtained satisfactory information on the only point upon which he was ignorant, he exclaimed,

“ I need not have asked you the question, Sir Edward ; all gentlemen are Conservatives. I am a Tory to the backbone. The Duke is my most intimate friend. Sir Robert has invited me to Drayton. Lord Sturnley calls me his political father, and I am proud to say my pupil does me justice. Wit, wine, and women, Sir Edward, have made him what he is. Oh, yes ! Church and State, and Church and King have been the watchwords of my family from the time of Constantine downwards. The founder of my race had the sword left him which Constantine wore when the cross appeared in the heavens. My eldest boy has a MS. written by Constantine himself, giving a minute description of every particular of that extraordinary event. The Government offered him five thousand pounds

for its possession, but he very properly refused, saying, ‘ that would, indeed, be selling my birthright for a mess of pottage.’ He ! he ! he ! Beggars description !”

“ This is a capital fellow,” muttered Sir Edward to himself. “ To think of his son refusing five thousand pounds for a MS., rather than part with a family relic. These hereditary families are those I wish to become acquainted with, who can thus afford to sacrifice five thousand pounds, without hesitation, when a ‘ family ’ consideration requires it to be made. He says he knows Bath well. I must direct our conversation to that topic, and above all seek to make his acquaintance. Yet I must not appear too anxious, for I have been told these hereditary noblemen are very touchy and difficult to please.”

“ That was a noble trait in his character, indeed,” said Sir Edward aloud.

“ Oh, nothing at all, nothing at all ! it’s family, not fortune, Sir Edward, that constitutes a man. Thank God, he wants neither ! Married the most beautiful woman in Europe.

When George the Fourth saw her, he said, ‘that woman must be Venus.’ Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description! My poor boy was sadly afraid his Majesty would fall in love with her; but it was ten years too late. The bravest man in the British army, sir. The Duke said to me, ‘Swainton, take care of that boy of yours, he’s the bravest lad in his Majesty’s service.’ Made but a poor match after all—as far as money is concerned—thirty thousand pounds down, and six thousand a-year for life. Poor work for a peer’s eldest son—but ‘any port in a storm’. Beggars description!”

“Oh! how little these hereditary families regard money,” thought Sir Edward, who looked on his new acquaintance with friendly but respectful feelings; and then determining not to allow the hours to glide by without hearing from his distinguished companion all that his long acquaintance with Bath would enable him to communicate respecting that place, he observed,

“I think your lordship said that you are

well acquainted with Bath. I have just taken a decent sort of house in Milsom Street for myself and my sisters for the season, and any information I could obtain as to Bath customs and society would be really quite an obligation; especially from one moving in such society as — ”

“ Oh ! you’re very good, you’re very obliging. Yes, I have known Bath these thirty years : dined hundreds of times with Mr. Staring, the great London banker, in the very house which you have just taken, Sir Edward. No man gives better Hock than Staring. By the bye, I fell in love with Anna Selina Storrace in your breakfast parlour. She had called in to consult the Marchioness of Littlebury concerning the monument she and Braham were about erecting to Rauzzini, who so long conducted the musical department of that city, and she shed so many tears whilst speaking of her former professor, that the hearth rug was quite saturated with tears. Beggars description ! She had her young minor canon with her at the time, you know who I mean,

Braham, the Canterbury canon, then a little boy, and I loved her for the sake of her tears. I suppose no woman ever shed so many tears in her life before as poor Storace did on the death of her old professor. The best Madona's head I ever saw in my life was at a small inn at Pisa. I call it the best, for the face was covered with tears, literally covered. You would have imagined that the tears had washed out all the vermilion of her cheeks, and even the ruby redness of her lips. The innkeeper has had thousands and thousands of offers for his Madona, but nothing could induce him to sell her. The rogue had very good reasons. His inn was always full to see the picture. When I was last there, there were nine or ten carriages in the court-yard; and as many more applicants, but all the beds were let. Talking of Pisa, I remember Lady Quickborough whom I met there, and with whom I had been acquainted ten years before at Bath; she had the whitest teeth I ever saw in my life. Crossing the Simplon afterwards in her carriage, I said to her, Lady Quickborough, I must lay a

wager with you; and she said, ‘Well, what about?’ So I said, ‘that your ladyship’s teeth are whiter than snow,’ and opening the door of the vehicle I sprang on the ground, and took up a handful of snow just drifted. How she did laugh! I never heard a woman laugh so much in my life. I suppose she laughed two hours without ceasing — but I won my wager, for she was obliged to admit that her teeth were whiter than even the then falling snow. And now what do you think was the wager? turning to the pretty Bath *marchande de modes*, who sat and smiled in the corner. ‘I am sure I cannot tell, my lord,’ she replied. Why, five kisses on her ruby lips, to be sure. Ha! ha! ha! and yet few men kissed Lady Quickborough. Beggars description!”

“I think Lady Quickborough is dead,” remarked Sir Edward.

“Yes, she is dead. Fine, tall, majestic, splendid woman, — cut off in the prime of her days, — not fifty, — as stately as the oak of the forest, and protecting and shading all

whom she cherished by her large heart and noble character. Never think of her without recalling the lines of the poet,

‘As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form
High o’er the vale, and midway braves the storm ;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.’

Lady Fortbury was another of the frequenters of Bath in my younger days. She was, perhaps, the most loveable woman that your eyes ever feasted on. I remember Lord Clifford said of her.

————— ‘collected there,
As in one point, all nature’s charms appear.’

Her feet were the smallest ever seen in the British dominions, and were perfect *bijoux* in a *cotillon*. The first time I saw her was at Teignmouth, where she was fond of straying along the road leading to Dawlish under the cliffs. I surprised her once in her rambles ; for, as she did not hear me approach, I made her tremble again when I said,

‘And list with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide weltering waves.’

She started like a fawn, and made a bound like an antelope. She was the most agile woman I ever saw;—would jump twenty or thirty feet like a young roe upon the mountains, and laugh at those she left miles behind her. Beggared description !”

“ Then there was the Countess of Steepdeen. I was a vast favourite of hers. We used to call her Lady Macbeth. She knew Shakspeare by heart,—never missed a word,—could begin a play at the beginning and go on to the end without the smallest assistance from her prompter. Her evening Shaksperian readings were crowded to suffocation. Many persons nearly died at those parties from heat and emotion. As to her Summer festivals at Steepdeen they were beyond the power of language to describe, when all the graces and wits of the day were clustered around her. And then such scenery !

‘ Solemnly vast. The trees of various shade,
Scene behind scene, with fair delusive pomp,
Enrich the prospect.’

I remember meeting Ugo Foscolo there, —

an odd man,—poor looking creature,—but quite a poet.

‘ The poet’s eye in a fine phrenzy rolling—

You know the rest. But I shall tire you with quotations! Poetry and the fair sex,” turning to the *marchande de modes* again, “were always my idols. He! he! he! Beggars description!”

Sir Edward entreated his lordship to continue his most agreeable reminiscences; and the pretty milliner ventured to say, “that she thought it was quite delightful to travel in such company.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” shouted his lordship, in a tone of affected gaiety, “well, if you *will* have some more of my recollections, I remember, then, your father, Sir Edward; I met him some years ago, at the coffee-room at the York.”

“Indeed,” said Sir Edward. “Yes; I remember, now your lordship is so good as to mention it, that my father did once go down to Bath on a business affair, on occasion of

a splendid fête given by the Duchess of Counterpoint."

"And a more straightforward, gentlemanly, mild, agreeable, man I have never met with than your father, Sir Edward. Do you remember the lines of Akenside ?

'Approach ! behold this marble. Know ye not
The features ?' "

pointing at the same time with his fore-finger to Sir Edward, as he spoke. "Vast resemblance, sir, between your features and those of your late excellent father. I might have continued Akenside's lines and asked

————— hath not oft his faithful tongue
Told you the fashion of your own estate,
The secrets of your bosom ?'

Your father, Sir Edward, was a truly honest man ; and who will not say of him,—

'An honest man's the noblest work of God.' "

"You are really too kind, my lord," said Sir Edward, who was captivated with the apparent feeling and respect with which Lord Swainton had spoken of his father. "I shall

long remember this agreeable journey from Bath."

"And I am sure *I* shall," said the pretty milliner.

"What are those lines of that fellow Moore's?" asked his lordship.

"Beauty and Folly and Reason, they say,
Went on a party of pleasure one day."

The lots are soon cast here, at any rate. I will take that of Folly, with my wings; and Beauty and Reason belong to my fellow passengers! He! he! he! Beggars description!"

"Indeed you are mistaken," replied Sir Edward, "not as to both, but as to one of the characters. We know to whom beauty belongs, undoubtedly; but I confess I should personate Folly much better than Reason."

"If it be true that 'it takes a wise man to make a fool,' perhaps you may personate that character Sir Edward," said Lord Swain-ton, with somewhat of assumed gravity. "Your father also, sir, was a modest man. 'Great modesty is nearly always allied to great talents or great virtues,' was a favourite maxim of

another Bath frequenter some five-and-twenty years ago, — Major Shovell, an unpropitious name, but, I suppose, the wisest man that ever lived, *i. e.* in modern times. He wrote some beautiful lines on the Bath waters, which began,

‘Scar’d at thy presence start the train of death,
And hide their whips and scorpions. Thee, confus’d,
Slow fever creeps from ; thee the meagre fiend
Consumption flies, and checks his rattling coughs.’

Talking of coughs, though, poor Major Shovell died of the most dreadful cough I have ever heard in all my life. He would sometimes cough two and three hours at a time without ceasing, till he became so black that it was impossible to discover the smallest difference between his hat and his face. Quite dreadful ! He died at the end of a cough of nearly four hours’ length. I have never forgiven myself for not attending his funeral, even though I was at the time he died a perfect skeleton, not one ounce of flesh on all my body ; persons used to come and see me as a curious spectacle ; my bones pierced through my skin in every direction. You might have seen my heart beat

and my lungs respire. But the Bath waters restored me.

‘Hygeia broods, with watchful wing,
O’er ancient Badon’s mystic spring ;
And speeds from its sulphureous source
The steamy torrent’s secret course ;
And fans th’ eternal sparks of hidden fire,
In deep unfathom’d beds below,
By Bladud’s magic taught to glow ;
Bladud, high theme of Fancy’s gothic lyre.’

I remember one of your late father’s excellent kind-hearted friends who was fond of Bath, Sir Charles Stilton, a great friend of the Duke of York’s, and indeed of everybody who knew him. The last time I saw him was at the Pump-room, I asked him, ‘Were you not well acquainted with the Duke of York, Sir Charles Stilton?’—‘Well acquainted with the Duke of York? Yes, I was indeed well acquainted with him. He was a good man ; yes, he was a good man ; as good a man as ever brake bread ; and he took his wine freely, freely.’—‘Did you know Mr. Pitt, Sir Charles Stilton?’—‘Did I know Mr. Pitt? Yes, I *did* know Mr. Pitt. He was a good man too.

Yes, he *was* a good man, as good a man as ever brake bread ; and he took his wine freely, freely.’ — ‘ Did you know Mr. Canning, Sir Charles ? ’ — ‘ Did *I* know Mr. Canning ? To be sure I knew Mr. Canning. He was a good man. Yes, he was a good man. Mr. Canning was as good a man as ever brake bread ; and he took his wine freely, freely.’ And thus I went on conversing with Sir Charles Stilton for an hour or two in the Pump-room, walking up and down, as was his custom, with his stick in his hand, but his hands behind him ; and in answer to all my inquiries he said the same thing of every one of whom he spake well (and he resembled your father in one thing, Sir Edward, he spoke ill of no one), ‘ He was a good man, sir, as good a man as ever brake bread, and he took his wine freely, freely.’ ”

Lord Swainton perceived with pleasure that they had arrived at Marlborough, and learnt with no small satisfaction that the coach stopped half an hour to afford passengers the necessary time for taking refreshments.

“ Well, Sir Edward, what say you to a little

soup, a deviled fowl, some *château margaux*; and taking this pretty belle into our party?"

The pretty belle declined the honour, "as she could never eat or drink when travelling;" but Sir Edward was delighted at the proposition, and "thought his lordship an admirable caterer."

"An additional halfcrown to the coachman, and another to the guard, will procure us an extra quarter of an hour for our dinner, and we can do some mischief with a knife and fork in that time, at any rate," said his lordship.

The coachman and guard looked well pleased, the landlord recommended his claret, but "took the liberty of suggesting, that a glass of 'particular' madeira, after the mulligatawney soup, would not be amiss;" and whilst the fowl was deviling he introduced some amusing patties.

"Now for the bill," said his lordship to the waiter, as he emptied the last portion of claret into his glass, and cracked *one* walnut; and then turning to Sir Edward, he observed: "We have dined well to-day, at any rate. What will be the reckoning?"

“ Oh, two or three guineas,” said Sir Edward, with real and unaffected indifference.

“ No more ? ” said his lordship ; “ then it will not be worth dividing : you will allow me to consider you my guest, Sir Edward ? ”

“ That would be impossible, my lord,” said Sir Edward. “ If your lordship will confer on me the privilege, of allowing me the honour of saying, that at least I *once* had the advantage of having Lord Swainton as mine, I should be both charmed and grateful.”

“ Oh no, no, no, Sir Edward ; you must not ask that,—but come, ‘ head or tail ? ’ that’s the best way ; you shall cry, and— ; ” his lordship broke off abruptly in the middle of his sentence, with apparent confusion, but, thrusting his hands into all his pockets, with seeming horror said, “ I ’ll turn that fellow away. That’s the third time this has happened to me, Sir Edward. My valet, a most confidential fellow, to whom I would entrust untold millions, who keeps my keys, cheque-books, government securities, everything, in fact, not in my banker’s hands, has allowed me to

come to London, now the third time, without a stiver in my pocket. I can forgive this no longer; I must send him his discharge from this very spot—this very house;” and then, raising his voice, he called back the waiter, and desired him to bring a sheet of paper and sealing-wax.

Sir Edward implored his lordship not to discharge so invaluable a servant for even this third act of negligence, but to reflect how difficult it was to procure one in whom confidence could be placed. “Besides which,” added Sir Edward; “I beg your lordship will feel that you have your purse-bearer with you.”

“Oh, you are too good, indeed. I cannot think of that; yet it will be provokingly awkward to arrive in London without even a sovereign in one’s pocket; and I dare say the fellow has never paid my place. I really would write, but my daughter at Bath is leaving to-day for Cheltenham, and the letter might not reach her.”

Sir Edward placed a handful of gold on

the table, and Lord Swainton was good enough to borrow five sovereigns.

“It is, indeed, an ill wind that blows no one any good,” said Sir Edward; “for I hope this inattention of your lordship’s servant may induce your lordship to make Clapham Hall your head-quarters whilst sojourning in the metropolis, though I regret to learn you are leaving Bath.”

“You are much too kind,” said his lordship; “much too kind! I shall be often at Bath, though I have broken up my establishment there.”

“Now, gentlemen — now, my lord — if you please,” said the guard, who had extended the refreshment from thirty minutes to nearly an hour. “Go, we must now, if you please.”

Sir Edward paid the bill, and the coach proceeded. The impression made by Lord Swainton on Sir Edward was evidently so favourable, that the former resolved on continuing the same line of proceeding which had already led to such happy results.

“An admirable dinner, and first-rate wine

gratis," thought his lordship ; " five sovereigns in a purse not of late often so patronised, an invitation to a citizen's mansion, and other good things in store, are no bad symptoms of improving fortune. Courage ! courage ! and all will be right yet. Who can tell but that I may make one of the Miss Clappertons Lady Swainton ? Bravo, bravo ! *allons, allons !* 'A faint heart never won a fair lady.' Beggars description." So he recommenced as follows ; —

" I think we were talking of Sir Charles Stilton, Sir Edward, when our dinner surprised us so agreeably."

" Yes, my lord, and I remember a story, of Sir Charles, which, perhaps, may amuse you. When a plain cheesemonger in the city, a carter went into his shop, and asked for a ha'pworth of cheese. 'We don't make ha'pworths of cheese,' said Sir Charles ; ' we make nothing less than pennyworths'.'—' Well, then, cut me a pennyworth's,' replied the carter, and the pennyworth of cheese was cut. ' Lend me your knife a moment, master,' said the carter, who, cutting the pennyworth of cheese

in two, took up one half, and threw down a halfpenny, exclaiming, ‘There master, that’s the way to make a ha’pworth of cheese.’ Sir Charles used to tell this story to ministers of state, bishops, and even princes of the blood. But pray, my lord, let me hear something more about Bath.”

“Bath, Sir Edward, has fallen off of late years. It was once the very liveliest place I ever set my foot into. That was when it was said,

‘Fashion in ev’rything bears sov’reign sway,
And Bath for “Life,” the gayest of the gay!’

Balls, parties, promenades, teas, theatre, assembly - rooms, recitations, suppers, and I know not what besides. Never a moment idle. Wearied to death with pleasure, and yet willing to die over again, so great was the enjoyment. The Duchess of Dimples was at that time in her glory. Beauteous creature! All the men were her slaves! She ruled over us all; but not with an iron rod, but with a golden sceptre, or rather with a fairy wand. Every one wept when they saw her get old. I

never shall forget the last time she entered the Pump-room, how the rank and beauty and fashion of Bath crowded round her whom nature and art had united to render one of the most beautiful, accomplished, and superior angels of this nether sphere; and I recollect Captain Beauchamp repeated the lines to “Old Time,” invoking him to ward off his dire effects from her lovely person.

‘ Know, should’st thou bid the beauteous Duchess fade,
Thou, therefore, must thy own delights invade;
And know, ’twill be a long, long while,
Before thou giv’st her equal to our isle—
Then do not with this sweet *chef-d’œuvre* part,
But keep, to shew the triumph of thy art.’

Those were the bright days of Bath, Sir Edward, next to those of Beau Nash; beggared description!

“Sir Joseph Binks was a great lover of Bath, Sir Edward, a man of great parts and wondrous knowledge. I’ve talked with him for hours together, and he used to make me laugh till my sides literally split, and my eyes became perennial fountains for my tears of joy and hilarity, when he sang to an old

humdrum tune, some lines written by Peter Pindar on the discovery of Botany Bay by Captain Cook.

‘ You have heard of Captain Cook, our worthy great commander !

The great Sir Joseph Binks, and Doctor Solander ;

They sail’d round the world, were perplex’d and were teased too—

To find out a place where the King might send his thieves to !

So, Britons, fill up bumpers, rejoice now, and all sing,

What a glorious set of thieves we shall have from their offspring.

‘ Bow, wow, &c.’

Ha ! ha ! ha ! Those were the days, Sir Edward, the days of the Beef Steak Club, Peter Pindar, and the Sons of Anacreon ; beggared description !”

“ They must have been joyous times, indeed,” replied Sir Edward ; “ but what is life at Bath now, my Lord ? No one can give me a better idea than your lordship how to pass away my time, and enable my sisters to kill theirs during the next three months.”

“ Oh, Bath is still a very delightful place. Not what it was—but very delightful. In the

morning to the Pump-room— then from the Pump-room to the Parades—the Crescents—a drive—a walk in Sydney gardens—a peep at Prior Park—a lounge in the libraries—exhibitions—billiards—a game of chess—a hand at whist—backgammon if you will ; early dinners—the theatre—or the rooms—cards—dancing— scandal — gossip — tea — ices — and home. There is the Harmonic Society, if you are fond of glees and catches. Riding schools, if your sisters are not good horsewomen. Baths, if they love warm water. Sedan-chairs for quiet snug rides, with a novel to read at leisure ; or your own carriage for a favourite drive, when the weather is not unpropitious.

‘Sweet Bath, the liveliest city of the land,
Where health and pleasure ramble hand in hand,
Where smiling belles their earliest visits pay,
And faded maids their ling’ring blooms delay ;
Delightful scenes of elegance and ease,
Realms of the gay, where every sport can please !’

Ha ! ha ! ha ! plenty of mirth, frolic, fun, and amusement still, Sir Edward. Beggars description ! The great secret is to know where

to find them all at a moment's notice, and to catch that moment as it flies,

‘Life let us cherish
While yet the taper glows.’

Eh, Sir Edward? and if an old man like myself, can be of any use to you, I shall be most happy to become your chaperon, or rather that of your sisters, when I am there, and that will be often, for I am a bit of a roamer. Bath society and Bath enjoyments beggar description, when really known, and really tasted; but a stranger, even with fortune and rank, will remain a stranger, still, unless introduced to the best circles. All depends on introduction. Your father's character I knew well, and I shall be most happy to be useful to his son.”

Sir Edward's gratitude knew no bounds. He insisted on conducting Lord Swainton to Clapham Hall, on their arrival in London, and informed his lordship that his carriage would be waiting for him at the White Horse Cellar, to convey him to his waiting and anxious sisters.

Lord Swainton was afraid that his sisters might be inconvenienced by the intrusion of

a perfect stranger, and at so early an hour in the morning too, and proposed to defer his visit till the next day ; but the less anxious he appeared to be to make the acquaintance of the Clappertons, the more anxious was Sir Edward to secure him, till at last his lordship said, “ that he felt it would really be rude, after such marked attention on Sir Edward’s part, to decline so obliging an invitation.”

On arriving at the White Horse Cellar, Sir Edward directed his groom, who was in attendance, to pay all charges to the coachman and guard, both for himself and his lordship ; and whilst all was preparing, and Lord Swainton was arranging his toilette, Sir Edward started off a ticket-porter in a hackney-coach with instructions to proceed at full speed all the way to Clapham Hall, with two words from Sir Edward to the Miss Clappertons, viz :

“ DEAREST GIRLS,

“ I have only two minutes in which to say that I have arrived in town, and shall be with

you half an hour after this *billet-doux*, with a peer of the realm, Lord Swainton of Swainton, a widower, the most captivating man imaginable. Prepare all for him in the twinkling of an eye.

“ Ever yours,

“ EDWARD.”

The travellers soon followed, and Sir Edward forthwith introduced Lord Swainton in due form to his sisters.

Lord Swainton complimented the Miss Clappertons on their “ roseate ” appearance, and declared “ that they would carry health to Bath, instead of seeking it from that charming city.” The portrait of their father next claimed his attention. “ What an admirable portrait ! ” said his lordship, and then in an under tone, approaching the Miss Clappertons, and shaking his head, he said,

“ ‘ ——— Yes, we have lost a father !

The greatest blessing heaven bestows on mortals,
And seldom found amidst these wilds of time,
A good, a worthy king ! ’ ”

The Miss Clappertons looked grave. It was their duty to do so.

“And that is the portrait, I presume,” he added, “of your late mother, Lady Clapperton?”

“It is, my lord,” said Sophia, with a marked emphasis of respect and humility.

“And the very model of goodness! The very perfection of good-nature, she must have been;” remarked his lordship, “there are some faces,” bowing at the same time to the Miss Clappertons, “which can never deceive you.”

“She was an admirable woman, indeed,” said Miss Sophia.

“Yes, that she was,” added Miss Charlotte; and as Sir Edward perceived the conversation was unexpectedly taking a serious turn, he said,

“Will your lordship allow me to show you your room, preparatory to our hour of luncheon. To-day we will lunch early.”

His lordship “would be truly grateful,” and suggested how happy he should be to look

over the mansion, which was indeed even more delightful than he had imagined or believed.

“ This is the billiard-room, my lord. What does your lordship think of it ? ”

“ That it is even worthy of having you, Sir Edward, for its proprietor. Beggars description ! ”

“ This is the library, my lord ; not so much frequented, I am sorry to say, as it should be.”

“ There are other modes of acquiring knowledge than by reading,” replied his lordship ; “ you belong no doubt, Sir Edward, to those who find sermons in stones, books in the running brooks — and good in everything. He ! he ! he ! That’s the way, Sir Edward, live to learn, and learn to live. Beggars description ! ”

“ That was my poor dear father’s bedroom,” said Sir Edward, pausing at the door, and not entering the chamber.

“ Ah ! ” sighed Lord Swainton,

“ ‘ The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life,—quite on the verge of heav’n.’ ”

“ And this is your chamber, my lord,” said Sir Edward, opening the door of the state-bedroom of Clapham Hall.

“ Fine room — good proportions — admirable wainscoting — just like poor dear Lady Dorothy’s room at Swainton. She never would sleep in any other — was born there — nursed there — cradled there — fondled there — brought up there — slept there the first night of her marriage — brought seven children into the world there — got sick there — died there — and went to heaven there. Just such another room. What a splendid prospect ! beautiful pictures ! Thank you, Sir Edward, I am sorry to occasion you so much trouble, I will join you when your alarum shall call us to your luncheon.” So Sir Edward left his lordship to arrange his toilette, and thus afforded him time to reflect on this change of affairs, and to ask himself whether this was

“ ———— the tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.”

“ Well, don’t you think I ’m a lucky dog ? ”

asked Sir Edward of his sisters, as he rejoined them in the dining-room whilst Lord Swinton made himself “beau” in the best sleeping-chamber.

“Indeed you are,” said Charlotte.

“Oh, it’s quite delightful!” replied Sophia.

“And what a charming man,” continued Charlotte.

“Any one can see he is a nobleman,” added Sophia.

“And wealthy as well as noble,” said Sir Edward; “none of your pauper lords—but an out-and-out nobleman in every sense of the word. He knows every one and everything. We shall get introduced at Bath to the *élite* of society. But mind, girls, I beseech you to mind, ‘we are Tories.’”

“That is, we are for the government you mean, don’t you, Edward?” asked Sophia.

“Yes, to be sure, my dear; for the Duke, for Sir Robert, and all that sort of thing. And pray mind, not one word about Dissenters. Church and State—Church and King—State and King, and the Tories for ever!”

“ Don’t fear, dear Edward,” said Charlotte ;
“ your sisters will not disgrace you.”

“ Oh, I am quite sure of that, my dear girl, but then you know one does not get hold of these real out-and-out noblemen every day ; and the best of it is, he knows all about us, —met our poor dear father at Bath when he went there, some years since, on an affair of business ; and therefore has nothing to learn of our former civic rank, to annoy him or to induce him to regret our acquaintance. I am not aware how long he will remain, but I shall endeavour to prevail on him to return with us to Bath in about a week. Be yourselves now, quite natural and quite at ease, and let us take care to profit well from his conversation and hints, for our future arrangements and residence at Bath.” So the luncheon-bell was rung, and the party assembled in the dining-room.

CHAPTER III.

———Ye thus hospitably live,
And strangers with good cheer receive.

DRYDEN.

Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the Hall House, and the whole estate.

ADDISON.

AMONGST the few friends of the Clappertons who had the right of *entrée*, and with it "the run of the house," was Captain Macfarlane. Having fought three duels for love affairs, in one of which he was wounded in his right hand, yet without any profit to himself from either, he was regarded at Clapham Hall as the "pink of honour;" and although he had too small an income either to give parties or to receive visitors, his "captainship" was a fortune for him with the Clappertons, and

the wonders of his "foreign travel" greatly amused Miss Charlotte and Miss Sophia. Captain Macfarlane was a man bordering on forty-five, of rather small dimensions, with little black eyes, hair somewhat inclined to be rather redder than auburn ought to be, mustachios adopted in Spain, large whiskers, covering a considerable portion of his weather-beaten cheeks, and uniformly dressed in a blue frock-coat, braided with lace and frogs. Of these coats he had two, one for state and the other for ordinary occasions, such as morning calls and daily life. He had a quick, sharp, somewhat unpleasant mode of speaking; but he was almost the only man of the Clapperton acquaintance who knew nothing about the City, and was profoundly attentive to all the little wants and wishes of the inmates of Clapham Hall. An illness of a prolonged, but not dangerous nature, had kept him from the Clappertons during the three past months; and he had not, therefore, been consulted, as he otherwise would have been, about their proposed arrangements for proceeding to Bath. Not,

indeed, that Captain Macfarlane had, or professed to have, any very large acquaintance in the fashionable world; but he was a gentlemanly fellow, was acquainted with a few good families, was well known to be a most honourable man, and was very generally invited as a sort of "make-up-man," on whom all could rely, to avoid sitting down thirteen to table, or to remedy a disappointment occasioned by the sudden indisposition of some one who ought to have gone on a pic-nic excursion. There were others, indeed, who regarded him as a much more important personage; and as Captain Macfarlane's card was to be seen almost everywhere, in some circles he was called "Captain Ubiquity."

"Captain Macfarlane!" said the servant, just as the Clappertons and Lord Swainton had commenced their *déjeuner à la fourchette*; and as both the Miss Clappertons rose to receive him with "How do you do, Captain?" laying a special emphasis on the first do; and as Sir Edward assured him "that he was DELIGHTED to see him," it was evident at once

to Lord Swainton that the Captain was a great favourite. The Captain had gone down to spend one of his "long days" at Clapham Hall, which meant, to arrive at luncheon time, and not leave till eleven at night, when the Clappertons invariably sent him home in their carriage, unless, as was sometimes the case, he preferred remaining all night. His intentions, on this occasion, were not to return till the following day; and when this was announced by him to the family, every member declared that they were "quite delighted."

"My lord, I have the honour to introduce to you my friend, Captain Macfarlane. Captain Macfarlane, I have the pleasure to introduce to you Lord Swainton of Swainton."

Each bowed, each smiled, and then every one gained his seat, whilst a *couvert* was placed on the table for the Captain.

"Well, my dear Captain," said Sir Edward, "why, it seems an age since we saw you here, and almost another since I last called on you. I fear you have had a relapse."

“Indeed, I have,” replied the Captain, “and I have now come to take my leave of you for a few months; for I am about to spend the winter at Brighton.”

“At Brighton!” exclaimed Miss Sophia; “why, we are leaving for Bath!”

“For Bath, Miss Sophia! Bath, do you say? Why, how in the world could you get it into your heads to go to Bath? They are only the “Rococos” who go there. Bath was in days of yore, some two score years ago and more, a very decent sort of place; but worn-out old ladies with sad coughs, ruined noblemen with small incomes, clergymen without livings, old maids who have lived out all their chances, and blacklegs who are contented with small but certain pickings, are almost the only frequenters of Bath now. Oh! you must come to Brighton.”

“Just like you, Captain, just like you,—full of strong prejudices. Why, I have seen Bath,—just returned from seeing it, and therefore am an eye-witness against you.”

“Oh! I said nothing against Bath town,

Bath streets, Bath water, or Bath hotels; did I, ladies? but only against Bath society: and though I do not know how long you have been at Bath, Sir Edward, I think I will venture a wager of a cup of coffee with the ladies, that your stay has not been long enough to initiate you into Bath mysteries."

"But if my sojourn has been short, that of Lord Swainton's has not been so," said the host; "and no one can be more eloquent in its praises than his lordship."

"All depends upon circumstances, Sir Edward,—all depends upon circumstances," said his lordship. "If your friend has been a great deal at Bath, I have not had the good fortune to meet with him. Society at Bath, like everywhere else, is of course various. Single men sometimes have more difficulty than others in their associations with family society; but for my part, I think the society at Bath for elegance, *tournure*, and genuine fashion, beggars description!" And then, turning to the Captain, he asked him, "Did you visit the Dovelands, the Weylands, the Pollerstones, Lady

Witchie, Lord Brelbanone, and the Marchioness of Fairtown ?”

The Captain confessed that he knew Bath better by report than from actual residence, and that during the month or six weeks he had occasionally spent at that watering-place, he had kept very little private society, and had lived almost wholly in public.”

“ Come, come, Captain, you have been rather too severe, then, on poor dear Bath, I think ; but, to cut the matter short, I must tell you I have taken the best house in Milsom Street for the season, and when you shall be tired of Brighton winds and waves, of the Old Steyne and the North Parade, of Blue and Buff, and Kemp Town, then take a trip to our city of ‘ Rococos ;’ for you know there will always be a bed at your service, as there is at Clapham Hall.”

“ Ah, you are always kind,” said the Captain, “ and I do not tell you that I shall not avail myself of your offer ; but for the present I require more bracing air than Bath, and, thank God, I have no need of its waters.”

“ But of a glass of this Sauterne,” said Lord Swainton ; “ the finest Sauterne I ever drank in my life — perfect nectar — beggars description ! ”

The Captain accepted the challenge, and on this subject, at least, there were not two opinions.

As Lord Swainton wished to write letters, announcing to his extensive circle of friends his arrival in town and where he had taken up “ head-quarters,” he had the privilege conferred on him of being closeted in the Miss Clappertons’ *boudoir*. He was well supplied by them with papers of varied hues, colours, and scents, with odoriferous waxes, seals for nearly every day in the year, and pens of crows, geese, and swans, steel, silver, and ruby.

The Clappertons and Captain Macfarlane were now left to their accustomed quiet chit-chat, which the latter began by asking,

“ May I ask you, where in the world you have met Lord Swainton ? how you became acquainted with him ? He seems a very clever

and agreeable companion, and his face and conversation are not unfamiliar to me; but I cannot, for the life of me, remember his name in the peerage."

"It is in Debrett," said Sir Edward, "and the family name was Cramwell."

"Cramwell,—Cramwell. Oh! I know now all about it," said the Captain; "to be sure, —to be sure. This was the Honourable Captain Cramwell, and who succeeded to his cousin's title as Baron Swainton of Swainton. Ah, Cramwell used to be a gay fellow,—the gayest of the gay,—more wit than money in former times: what he is now, I know not. His estates are, doubtless, considerable."

"Immense," said Sir Edward; "he is evidently very rich, and the cleverest man in conversation I ever met with,—delightful companion!"

"He is, indeed," said Miss Charlotte.

"Have you lost your heart, then?" asked the Captain, railingly; "though I ought rather to have asked his lordship that question."

"Always gallant, Captain," said Miss Char-

lotte; "your illness has not diminished your politeness."

"Swainton—Swainton," repeated the Captain; "I should like to see Debrett."

So Debrett was brought from the library, and the Captain satisfied himself that the title was the same as he had anticipated.

"I ought to know his eldest son," he continued, "for if I am not greatly mistaken, we were both at Oxford together."

"Come, Captain, what do you say to a game of billiards?"

"With all my heart, Sir Edward; but I hope the ladies will join us."

"Oh! most certainly, Captain," said Miss Charlotte; and to the billiard-room Lord Swainton also very shortly hastened.

"I've just been writing a *billet-doux* to the prettiest woman in the universe," said his lordship as he entered the room; "the very emblem of a rose-bud — with all its odour and all its tints, but without its thorns. A perfect Hebe. I should like you to know her, Sir Edward. With the eye of a gazelle, the step

of an antelope, the tongue of an angel, and the lips of a seraph; she's the most perfect creature of a girl I ever saw. Scarcely nineteen. Immensely rich. Does not know the extent of her fortune. She always calls me 'papa;' her father and myself were so intimate; and I always call her 'my little witch.' Will not enter into all her property until twenty-five years of age, in consequence of some peculiar restrictions in an old marriage settlement. Shocking things, ladies, those marriage settlements! He! he! he!" and then turning to Miss Sophia, he said, "perhaps you would like to hear my scribble to my little witch? Beggars description!"

"Oh dear, yes!" said Sophia.

"We should, indeed, my lord," said Charlotte; and his lordship read,

"Clapham Hall, Surrey; Tuesday.

"MY DEAR LITTLE WITCH,

"Perhaps you will think me bewitched when I tell you where I am; and, indeed, if you knew all, you would not wonder that I

was so. Bright eyes, generous hearts, noble hospitality, graceful board, fine billiard-table, splendid library, and the very twin bed-room of poor Lady Dorothy's at Swainton. Could imagine myself back in the old hall. Same wainscoting — same panels — same everything. Your poor old 'papa' is romancing away here with the charming Miss Clappertons, and their fine-hearted brother, Sir Edward, to say nothing of an old friend of poor Scrope's when he was at college — Captain Macfarlane. I am just about joining the party at a game of pool. I wish my little witch were here to charm some of the balls into the pockets. Remember me to Lady Georgiana, and tell her I have not forgotten the scolding she gave me when I last saw her. Nevertheless I place myself at her feet, and hope not to remain there always; but to be raised by her fairy wand to favour and smiles. My heart embraces thee, my dear little witch,

“ Your affectionate papa,

“ SWAINTON.”

“ To the Honourable Miss Woodstock,
Gower Street, London.”

“ Oh, how charming !” said Sophia.

“ What a delightful letter, my lord !” exclaimed Charlotte.

“ I thought I had the honour of being at college with the Honourable Scrope Cramwell,” said the Captain.

“ Oh, yes ! I remembered all about it whilst I was scribbling a line to him in Mademoiselle’s boudoir,” said his lordship ; “ and I know it will give him pleasure to hear that you are recovering from illness. Fine fellow, sir, is Scrope ! Best memory of any man I ever saw in my life. I do think he remembers being born. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Beggars description ! At any rate he will describe Lady Dorothy’s nurse with so much exactitude, (and she died a month after he was born,) that he must remember distinctly the events of his first thirty days. Yet they say, that children and kittens never see for a month. He ! he ! he ! But Scrope is like the Bristol men, who ‘ sleep with one eye open.’ Ha ! ha ! ha ! and glorious eyes he has. They won him the lips, the heart, the eyes, the fortune, of his angel of a wife. Beggars description !”

“ Ah ! my old friend Scrope is married then,” said the Captain.

“ To be sure he is ! and I suppose he is the happiest man on the face of the earth ; the very happiest. I never saw such a happy man. I often say to him, ‘ Scrope ! you look just like a man I once saw at Lord Ayrton’s pet farm, eating bread and fat pork in the pantry.’ Ha ! ha ! ha ! His very eyes stand out with fatness.”

“ Ah ! has he got stout then ?” asked the Captain.

“ Stout !” exclaimed his lordship ; “ why, Scrope is a larger man than was the late Lord Queenstown. Stout ! imagine two single gentlemen rolled into one. Full two. You might say three — or even four. There never was but one man as fat as Scrope, and that was Daniel Lambert. Ha ! ha ! ha ! His wife tells him he ought to have a carriage with eight wheels ; and I say yes, and drawn with eight horses. Talking of horses, Captain, did you ever see Lord Snowton’s four-in-hand ? The best cattle in the universe. Beggar de-

scription! I'd travel on foot from here to the Caspian Sea, all the way, and be drowned on the road into the bargain, to see four such animals. You had a fine pair of chesnuts, Sir Edward, in the chariot this morning. Fond of chesnuts—chesnut horses—roasted chesnuts—a duck and chesnuts—chesnut pudding—chesnut soup—chesnut trees—*marroniers*—nothing like chesnut soup. Did you ever eat chesnut soup, ladies?" turning to the Miss Clappertons; "it beggars description. Lady Murray, of Passy, first taught me how to make it. The finest combination of art and nature in the universe. Sir Charles Stilton, when informed of it, travelled from Bath to London to give a special dinner to his Majesty's ministers, in order to introduce chesnut soup to their notice. Lord E—— was delighted with it, and pronounced it to be superior to turtle. Poor Sir Charles! how vexed he was! He loved chesnut soup with all his heart, but he adored turtle soup with all his soul. Ha! ha! ha! I remember Sir Charles stopped me in Regent Street, and asked me 'if I had ever

eaten chesnut soup?'—'No, Sir Charles; but I have no objection to make the experiment.' He! he! he! —'Then to-day, at seven, at the Square,' said Sir Charles; and I think I must have eaten a large soup tureen full, or rather a large soup tureen empty. Ha! ha! ha! 'Sir Charles,' said I, 'do you know Lord E——?'—'Do I know Lord E——? Yes, I think I do, indeed. Lord E——! — Lord E——! — why, he's a good man — as good a man as ever brake bread — and he takes his wine freely, freely. But he likes chesnut soup better than turtle.' Poor Sir Charles, he could scarcely forgive this, even in Lord E——. Sir Charles's coat of arms ought to have been three turtles, quartered with bucks' heads; for turtle and venison were the elements of his being. Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! — Nothing like Jamaica for turtles! When I was in Jamaica, ladies, I lived upon turtle 365 days every year. Turtle roasted and turtle boiled, turtle hashed and turtle stewed, turtle steaks and turtle chops, turtle pies and turtle patties. I had a turtle shell arranged like a

little bulrush boat for my poor Scrope. Lady Dorothy had a turtle head-shell stuffed for a pineushion. My girls had turtle fins filled with emery for their needles. It beggared description to see how we turtled it—and I used to call my two youngest girls ‘two turtle-doves.’ Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! he! Beggared description!”

After an hour or two at “pool,” at which his lordship evinced no great talent, and lost a few shillings to the ladies with “great pleasure,” he challenged Sir Edward to a game at billiards, playing the French game, if equally agreeable to his host.

“Quite immaterial,” said Sir Edward. “I am afraid though, as I know my own table, it will be hardly fair to risk much upon our game.”

“Double or quits,” said his lordship. “You understand me, Sir Edward? I’ll draw a cheque for 10*l.* on Coutts’s, or one on Aldgate pump.”

“With all my heart,” said Sir Edward; and the game was played. Lord Swainton was a

first-rate player. Sir Edward had really no chance with him, but his lordship so managed his play as only just to win the game and obviate the necessity for his drawing a cheque upon Coutts's.

"So I must give you a cheque upon Aldgate pump, Sir Edward, must I? Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

"Or my revenge, my lord."

"Oh with all my heart. Double or quits still."

Sir Edward played admirably; but Lord Swainton better. Still for sometime the game was neck and neck. His lordship talked no longer. His nervous shake of the head increased prodigiously, and his anxiety might truly be said to beggar description.

"You have beaten me, my lord," said Sir Edward, as he advanced to his lordship and placed ten sovereigns in his hand; "but as the first game was only by two, and the second only by one point, will you play one more game, before I take you to see my stables?"

"Oh, with all my heart," replied his lord-

ship ; “ fifteen pounds and fifteen will make thirty. If I win I’ll purchase some pretty trinket or other for my little witch, and send it to her on her birthday, next Friday ; and if not, why I suppose I must do the same thing ; but with my own money, instead of yours, Sir Edward. He ! he ! he ! as I stood godfather to her I must not forget her, dear child.”

Lord Swainton felt somewhat nervous, lest his adversary should have done, as he had, in concealing his strength ; but to his great delight, he soon discovered that this was not the case ; and as he added fifteen more sovereigns to his astonished and delighted purse he muttered to himself, “ Admirable people, these city people !—feast you like princes, and pay you besides.”

The horses were splendid, the stables were admirable, the court-yard was worthy of olden days, the garden was the best managed garden ever seen in winter ; the hothouse was equal to any thing he had ever beheld in this country, but not to the orangery at Versailles

where he had beheld ten thousand orange trees in full bearing at the same moment ; nor yet to the gardens at Potsdam, where the King of Prussia gave away pine-apples by the sack, since they grew like caterpillars ; and in one word, Lord Swainton so extolled Clapham Hall, that Sir Edward declared, “ he had always thought it a decent sort of a place, but after what his lordship had been good enough to say, he felt really quite in love with it.”

“ Surprising place that Bolkham is,” said his lordship ; “ few men so extraordinary as its venerable possessor. A father at 85, and grandfather at 104. I was there once with Prince Esterhazy at sheep-shearing time. About a million sheep — perhaps two million — never saw so many sheep in all my life before, nor since. The whole country for miles round looked like one vast leg of mutton. Lord Bolkham said to Prince Esterhazy, ‘ Well, prince, what do you think of this ? Have you ever seen so many sheep collected before ? ’ ‘ Never,’ replied the prince, ‘ but I have seen

as many shepherds.' If Lord Bolkham had dared, he would have ordered the Prince's carriage. Sad disappointment ! ah ! ah ! ah ! After all done and said, though, the sheep were very fine—very fine indeed !—Beggared description."

The dinner was splendid. Birch transmitted his white soup, Angell his venison pasty, and at seven o'clock it was announced, by a newly-imported, true West End footman, that,

" Sir Edward is served."

Madeira, hock, champagne, sauterne, port, sherry, and clarets of three growths, all equally good, graced the groaning and the festive board ; and it was nearly nine before even the ladies withdrew.

" The ladies !" said Lord Swainton, as soon as seats were regained, and fresh glasses and cool wine had been placed on the table, " the ladies ! Sir Edward ; our guardian angels when young, our companions in advanced years, our treasures in poverty, our jewels in wealth, our goddesses always. Hip, hip, hip ! ha ! ha ! ha !"

" With all my heart, my lord," exclaimed Sir Edward.

“Ditto to the last speaker,” chuckled the Captain. And all three smacked their lips, and praised the “bee’s wing.”

“You ought to be in parliament, Sir Edward,” said Lord Swainton; “men of your fortune, talents, and rank, *ought* to be there. My friend, Sir Oscar Morbleu, one of the sitting members for Warnstable, is tired of parliamentary life, and is on the look-out for a successor. The seat cost him 5000*l.*; would take three; 3000*l.* more would do the rest; and a true Church and King man, a Conservative of the right sort might be sure of his seat; and that within six weeks from the present time. What say you, Sir Edward?”

“That I should like it of all things; but the only thing I fear is a change of administration.”

“Not the least chance; not a possibility,” replied his lordship, who was in an ecstasy on perceiving that the bait had been swallowed. “Suppose there should be a blow-up in France, and the Whigs and Radicals availing themselves of the excitement it would create, should

press on some measure of reform, what would it amount to? Some half-and-half measure, to gull the people and silence popular clamour. Never fear, Sir Edward; the Whigs have as many rotten boroughs as the Tories, and can less afford than they can to disfranchise their own constituents and lose their own property. What say you, Captain?"

"Upon my word, my lord, I hardly know what to say. I cannot place any reliance upon the Whigs. If once in power, they will not be easily driven from it; and to secure their places, they may go much greater lengths than we now can anticipate. Still, if Sir Edward has an eye to parliament, a seat in Warnstable for 6000*l.* is no bad spec. If I had 6000*l.* to spare I would accept it to-morrow."

"The fact is," said Sir Edward, "I know very little of these matters myself, but as far as 6000*l.* are concerned, I would willingly give that sum to be assured of my seat."

"Oh, never fear, never fear; if you'll spend your 6000*l.* I'll manage the trick for you. The first day of the session my friend Sir

Oscar Morbleu will accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and a new writ will be moved for. Four or five days before the commencement of the session I will accompany you to Sir Oscar's. His seat is not seven miles from the borough. On depositing his nomination to the Chiltern Hundreds in our hands, and a request to Sir James — to move for a new writ, he shall receive 3000*l.* The other 3000*l.* will be expended, if necessary, in the usual manner. The managers of the borough will accept 3000*l.* this time, on condition of having a second election so soon. Thus, for 6000*l.* you will make one seat in the borough your own; and with a little good management you may represent for life, or till raised to the peerage, the good town of Warnstable. Come, captain, let us say, Sir Edward Clapperton, member of parliament for the borough of Warnstable."

"Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah!"

Sir Edward smiled; Sir Edward blushed; Sir Edward attempted a speech, by no means a bad one, and proposed—

“ My noble mover, and my gallant seconder, Lord Swainton and Captain Macfarlane ! ”

“ Bravo ! bravo ! ” cried the toasted guests, and the wine was poured down in copious libations, until the ladies summoned the gentlemen to the drawing-room.

“ I have the honour to present to you, ladies,” said his lordship as he entered the room, “ Sir Edward Clapperton, M. P. for the borough of Warnstable ! ”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! that is a good joke,” said Sophia.

“ Oh, really, my lord, you ’ll make us die with laughter,” said Charlotte.

“ It ’s no laughing matter, though,” said the captain, looking most gravely. “ Your brother is not, but he will be, member for Warnstable in less than six weeks from this time.”

“ Oh, that will be delightful ! won’t it, Charlotte ? ”

“ Yes, I think so indeed, dear Sophia. Only mind, Mr. Edward, don’t you behave as shabbily about franks as Alderman Tin does to his

girls. They say, they are always obliged to apply to other members rather than to their pa' to frank their covers."

"Always the case, ladies; always the case; shoemakers' children are the worst shod; but, if franks are of any use to you, pray make as much use of me as you like. My pen and my name are alike at your service,

———— and do, as is my du-ty,
Bow to the shadow of your shoe-tie.

Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! Beggars description."

Franking letters — sipping black coffee — drinking gunpowder, and tasting *liqueurs* from Corcellet's at Paris — with a quiet round game, many jokes, and some riddles and rebuses, were the occupations of the merry party, till the splendid musical clock chimed the quarters and the hour of midnight.

The ladies withdrew. The Captain soon followed; and Lord Swainton and Sir Edward were left alone.

"I hope I can rely on the discretion of the

Captain," said Lord Swainton. "If he has not changed his character, of late years, he is at once the bravest and the least considerate of men; and if but one whisper was heard, in private or public, respecting the borough of Warnstable and my friend Sir Oscar's intentions, he would have his seat besieged with applicants, and contesting candidates would destroy all our plans. Silence is the word, Sir Edward,—the silence of death. A breath would defeat us."

"I will take care of that," said Sir Edward. "I know the Captain well. He values my friendship as I do his; and if I request secrecy I may rely on it."

"Good,—good; and good night, too," replied his lordship; and Morpheus soon took to his embraces the host, hostesses, and guests of Clapham Hall.

CHAPTER IV.

Who says he was not
A man of much plot,
May repent that false accusation ;
Having plotted and penn'd
Six plays to attend
The farce of his negotiation. DENHAM.

THE tide has certainly set in, in my favour, thought Lord Swainton, as he arranged his toilette the next morning. "Here are thirty good sovereigns in my purse ; my journey to London paid ; I owe nothing to mine host ; and it's hard if I cannot clear a thousand pounds out of this Warnstable election. By the bye, it is now six weeks since I met Sir Oscar Morbleu at Bath ; it is high time I should write to him. He may have altered his mind or augmented his price. This young man Clapperton is evidently delighted at the idea : I must ensure his friendship, and con-

firm, by my stay, the good impressions I have made on him. These citizen folks have a great fondness for those who will “put their legs under their mahogany;” and nothing suits me better just now than this sort of thing. But above all things this affair of Warnstable must be managed. If Sir Oscar has altered his mind, there’s old Norton, the member for Bowen, and Craven, who sits for Tougherton, and several others, no doubt, to be heard of, who wish to get out of parliament; though I should prefer, greatly prefer, Sir Oscar. He understands commission, percentage, and all that sort of thing; and can slip a five hundred pound note into one’s hands in a very gentlemanly manner. I must write to him at once; and such a letter as I can show to Clapperton.” So his lordship rang for paper and its accompaniments, and dashed off the following letter to Sir Oscar Morbleu:—

“WILL my dear Sir Oscar allow me to ask, if he is still disposed to accept the Chil-

tern Hundreds, and on the same conditions ? If so, I have an able, honest, staunch Conservative, of great talents, honourable family, and long purse, who aspires to a seat in St. Stephen's. An interview at Bath, or at the Rookery,—as most convenient, is suggested. A letter by return of post to Long's will be sure to find me.

“ His very truly,

“ SWAINTON.”

“ Excellent,—excellent,”—said Sir Edward, as he read this communication placed in his hand in the breakfast parlour just before the commencement of a morning *déjeûner à l'Anglaise* ; “ this is just the very thing. In four days your lordship can receive an answer, and we can then decide as to the time of our departure, either for Bath or the Rookery of Sir Oscar. Till then, I beg your lordship will consider yourself our guest. We have ample room for any of your lordship's friends whom you may feel disposed to invite to our plain and humble hospitality ; and though we have not the splendour or luxuries of Swain-

ton Hall to offer them, we have some tolerable wines, French beds, and a decent billiard-table."

His lordship assured Sir Edward that he could not think of thus abusing his truly gentlemanlike hospitality, but that as he must go to London that day to consult his bankers on the subject of an investment of monies, which he was about to receive from the Court of Chancery, he should be happy to introduce to them Sir Felix Montague, the wittiest man in his Majesty's dominions, and as handsome as he was witty. And then turning to the Miss Clappertons, he said "*prenez garde ! prenez garde*, my friend Felix is a gallant gay Lothario, though for honour and virtue a perfect model."

"Now this is very kind of you, indeed," said Sir Edward ; "and mind you tell your friend that I have either horses at his service, or stables for the use of his stud. It is of course understood he will accept a bed."

"Oh yes ! oh yes ! if I can persuade him to come," said his lordship ; "but these winter

nights men like he who sleep in clover, will not even turn out for velvet sometimes. Ha ! ha ! ha ! He ! he ! he ! Beggars description !”

“ I don’t know what to make of your new friend,” said Captain Macfarlane to Sir Edward Clapperton, after the departure of his lordship for London.

“ But I do,” replied Sir Edward ; “ and, present company always excepted, he ’s about the most gentlemanly man I have met with, for many a summer day. Besides which, he is invaluable to myself and my sisters ; and if he gets me into parliament for Warnstable, I shall never be able to repay him, so great will be my obligations.”

“ Oh, he is charming !” said Sophia.

“ Quite delightful !” said Charlotte.

And as Captain Macfarlane feared his prudence, caution, and doubts, might be misinterpreted for jealousy, unkindness, or some other equally unamiable characteristic, he resolved to join in the general note of approbation, and said,

“ Oh, his lordship is an admirable com-

panion, certainly, and tells as good a story as any man I ever heard in my life."

"Indeed he does," said Sir Edward; "my journey from Bath I shall never forget. But I wonder who is his friend Sir Felix Montague? Do you know, Captain?"

"Oh, he's a man that's well known in the club-houses;—plays well, eats well, drinks well; is a great friend of Colonel Sabrope, and bets largely, or used to do so, at Newmarket. The Honourable Mr. Bingham and himself have been at Copenhagen, Madrid, Munich, and other places together; and I have heard that at Baden-Baden he has won some money. He is a first-rate billiard player, and would, I think, be a good match for Lord Swinton, for his lordship knows how to handle the cue most certainly."

"Yes, he's a thorough man of the world," said Sir Edward; "loves play, women's society, the theatre, amusements, and yet, I suspect, is a profound politician."

"I doubt his profundity," replied the Captain; "but I have no doubt as to his being

an admirable tactician ; and few men, I should say, understood better how to manage a contested election. But I must be going, I have an appointment at two at St. James's."

"Adieu, my dear Captain," said Sir Edward ; "take care of yourself."

"And take care of *yourself*," replied the Captain, rather significantly.

"Oh, trust me, I will take care," said Sir Edward, thinking that his friend made some allusion to the large expenses attendant on borough elections ; "weasels are not caught asleep."

"Ladies, adieu !" said the Captain ; and the ladies expressed their hopes that they should soon see him at Bath.

Notwithstanding this favourable *congé*, the Clappertons were not, however, well pleased with the Captain. They thought he had exhibited a little jealousy ; that Lord Swinton had beaten him out of the field respecting Bath ; and that the manner he had spoken of Sir Felix Montague was neither kind nor gentlemanly.

Sir Edward confessed that he had a similar feeling to that of his sisters. "But then," he said, "poor Macfarlane has been ill, was out of sorts, was taken by surprise to find his lordship here, came down for a quiet chit-chat with us, and was by no means accoutred as he would have been, if he had known the sort of society he would have met with. No, no, Macfarlane is a good fellow, and as long as I have a bottle of port he shall have half of it."

The afternoon soon fled—the family plate was brought out, the oldest and finest wines raised from their long-encrusted beds; and the preparations for Lord Swainton and Sir Felix Montague were on the first and best scale.

"Miss Clappertons and Sir Edward, I have the honour to present to you my kind, true, and admirable friend, Sir Felix Montague," said Lord Swainton; "a Pindar for wit, without his coarseness; a Brummell for the *beau monde*, without his conceit; and a Burke for eloquence, without his severity."

And then turning round to Sir Felix Montague, he said, "My dear Montague, these are the Miss Clappertons, and this is Sir Edward; I explained to them my desire to make you mutually acquainted; at the same time I feel I owe you all my best apologies for this abrupt introduction."

"Ladies," said Sir Felix, "my kind friend Lord Swainton no sooner noted to me your good pleasure, than I hastened to throw myself at your feet; and your brother knows how we men knock about in this world of ours, whenever beauty, wit, and benevolence command us."

"Well said, well said!" exclaimed his lordship. "And now let me tell you, ladies, a little story. I had scarcely left Clapham to-day, and arrived in the little village rejoicing in the name of London, than I met my poor boy Scrope. I never saw such surprise depicted in any one's countenance in my life. He thought me at Bath, as I thought him in Wiltshire. He wept with joy to see me. I always call him my boy, though nearly thirty

summers have passed over his head. But what do you think I have done?"

"Not shot him, I hope," said Sir Felix.

"No, nor scolded him, I hope," said Miss Charlotte.

"But invited him, I trust, to join our family dinner-table," said Sir Edward, with genuine politeness of feeling.

"I have even been such a monster," exclaimed his lordship; and retreating to the door, called—"Scrope, come and speak for yourself."

And Scrope entered.

"The Honourable Scrope Cramwell," said his father, "Sir Edward and ladies; my son, as the saying is,—the very image of me when he was young; never such a resemblance in the world before. Beggared description! But, since he has got so fat, I have nothing to say to him."

"I have really to apologise, Sir Edward, for this extraordinary intrusion, but my father is fond of these —"

"Very agreeable surprises," said Sir Ed-

ward; and the dinner was soon after announced.

Scrope Cramwell—for we will drop the Honourable, for the sake of brevity, and call him Scrope,—was a fine-hearted fellow at bottom; but as he had had many hard battles to fight, from want of money and means, in his rising in the world, he looked at thirty very near fifty. Still he preserved his natural gaiety, and although he was far from approving his father's mode of life, and very inconsiderate conduct, yet he ever evinced as a son the most sincere affection and unfeigned love. But for an annuity which he granted to Lord Swain-ton, and which was paid him monthly, to his own receipt, to prevent it being mortgaged or anticipated, his lordship would have had no positive or assured means of support; since estates, legacies, marriage-portions, and everything else, had long since been swept away by this lover of dissipation. Scrope had married tolerably well; not as well as his lordship had reported to the Clappertons, nor anything like it, but he had an income of about 1500*l.* per

annum ; and as he had sown all his wild oats, and a prodigious quantity of them, he was as steady as a Cramwell could be, and eschewed his father's ways.

“ Well, Scrope,” said his father as soon as they were seated at table, “ I forgot to ask you after your wife ? Charming creature ! affectionate daughter ! Best wife I ever heard of, except your poor mother, Lady Dorothy ! ”

“ I thank you, my lord, both for her and myself,” said Scrope ; “ quite well, very happy, and remarkably quiet.”

“ Quiet ! quiet ! ” retorted his lordship rather peevishly. “ Some people seem to think the great end of life is to be quiet. A mole is quiet ; a hedgehog is quiet ; a tortoise is quiet ; the Dead Sea is quiet ; the grave is quiet ; we are not born to be quiet, but to be gay, lively, animated ! *N'est-ce pas, mademoiselle ?* ” addressing himself to the eldest Miss Clapperton, who sat next him.

“ Oh certainly, my lord, I am very fond of life ; but then we must be quiet sometimes.”

“ Never ! ” said his lordship. “ Never, ma-

demoiselle; that's a dangerous habit, to be quiet; it grows upon one. Nature is never quiet, always at work, always occupied: snow falling, rain descending, cataracts leaping, rivers flowing, seas roaring, wind blowing, trees shooting, clouds moving, sun, moon, and stars shining; lightning darting, thunder rolling, earthquakes swallowing, volcanoes burning! and why should man be the only quiet thing in the universe? No, no, no! it's a bad thing to be quiet. To be quiet is to be sleepy; to be sleepy is to be apoplectic; to be apoplectic is to die; and to die is to be quiet indeed. But I suspect even your wife, Scrope, is not so fond of quietness as to desire that?"

"Always the same, my lord; always full of wit and humour. I have travelled many a mile on foot and horse, but never met your equal."

"And is your father always so full of life and anecdote?" asked the younger Miss Claperton of Scrope.

"Oh, always, always." And then, in an under tone—"He is the most extraordinary

man I ever heard of. At his time of life he will beat me hollow in walking, running, bowling, cricketing, fishing, shooting, hunting, singing, galloping, eating, drinking, and in fact in everything."

"In spending the bank-notes, you might have added," whispered Sir Felix Montague to his friend Scrope, who sat on his other side.

"And in bouncing," replied Scrope, in a very low whisper.

"Scrope, Scrope," said his father, "taking away my character? No whispering. Ladies, you must call these rogues to order, or they will whisper away my character."

"That would be difficult," muttered Montague in the ear of his friend, and Scrope smiled significantly.

"Sir Edward! will wine be agreeable?" asked his lordship; and Sir Edward was "most happy."

"What do you think of this madeira, my lord?" inquired Sir Edward, with the air of one who knew what must be the reply.

“ I will tell you, Sir Edward—

‘ Drink, drink ; there ’s a spell in its every drop

’Gainst the ills of mortality !

Talk of the cordial that sparkles for Helen ;

Her cup was a fiction, but this is reality.’

Beggars description !”

“ Better wine than even Sir Oscar’s, my lord,” remarked Montague, “ who, by the bye, is about resigning his seat, if he cannot find a purchaser.”

“ Indeed,” observed Lord Swainton, with as much *nonchalance* as if the subject had been a matter of total indifference to him, and not as if he had held a long conversation with Montague, on his way down to Clapham Hall, on the best means of bringing this subject again on the “ tapis,” and securing young Clapper-ton as a candidate ; “ I have heard something of this before. Oh, yes ! Morbleu has an admirable cellar, and it is well stocked besides ; but, who told you about his seat ?”

“ I forget now whether it was young Lord Dalrymple or Colonel Palmer ; but they both were of opinion, that if he resigned his seat

without making some prior arrangement with a new candidate, and securing him the influence of his party and the votes of his electors, there would be many candidates in the field, and large sums would be expended by political rivals."

Lord Swainton looked with affected earnestness at Sir Edward, nodded his head most significantly, and simply said, "All right."

"What's 'all right,'" asked Scrope, with genuine curiosity. "Some plot, my lord, with Sir Edward?"

"Nothing at all, Scrope. Little pitchers have great ears; and listeners sometimes hear no good of themselves. Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

"It's a fine old borough to represent," said Montague, who was invited to Clapham Hall by his lordship, to aid him in this most important negotiation, "those rascally Whigs will move heaven and earth to get it into their clutches, if Sir Oscar should take it into his head one of these days to throw up his seat in a fit of *ennui*, and leave the combatants to fight it

out; and he is just the sort of man to do it. Oh, what a scramble there would be for that seat! It is one of the oldest boroughs in the kingdom, and bribery and treating are really sanctioned by usage and immemorial custom. I should not wonder if ‘young Ward,’ who is anxious to get a seat, should become a candidate—and money is no object to him. He could throw away bank-notes like dirt.”

Sir Edward listened with breathless attention to every word uttered by Sir Felix, and watched the countenance of his lordship. His lordship knew this well—and adapted his face accordingly.

“We shall see what we shall see,” said his lordship, shaking his head yet more significantly at Sir Edward than before, and at the same time holding his green glass for hock.

“Will hock be agreeable, Sir Edward?”

“Any wine you prefer is agreeable, my lord,” replied the anxious candidate, who looked upon Lord Swainton as the *beau idéal* of a negociator—and the very king of diplomats.

Lord Swainton now perceived that enough had been said by Montague, and gave the agreed on signal for silence, by asking Sir Felix to take wine with him.

The conversation was then changed to the miscellaneous chit-chat of a very pleasant dinner, and the ladies retired, the gentlemen talked about politics and turf news, horses and dogs, farming and actresses, the opera and Newmarket, as usual; and then coffee was announced, and the ladies were rejoined.

“Let us have two minutes’ chat together,” said Lord Swainton, as he walked across the hall arm in arm with his host. “I think after what Sir Felix has said about the borough, we must take stronger measures.”

“So do I,” said Sir Edward, “and that without delay.”

Lord Swainton was delighted.

“Now, Sir Edward,” said his lordship, in a tone of deep and mysterious solemnity, “I am one of the last men in the world to make many professions, but I confess you have so charmed me by the whole of your conduct, that I am

quite at your disposal in this Warnstable matter."

"Indeed, my lord, you are much too good. What steps do you recommend?"

"Why, I learnt to-day that Sir Oscar Morbleu is really at his seat, and will not leave it for a week to come. Once in London, the game will be up. My plan is to start to-morrow, carriage and four, to the Rookery, take him by surprise, obtain his written resignation, and his demand for the Chiltern Hundreds, then pay into his bankers a sum of money on his account, and the remainder when a new writ shall be moved for, on the first day of the Session. You need not trouble yourself about money matters — I will make the necessary advances, if you prefer it; it's precisely the same thing to me, and you can pay to Scrope, or to my bankers, or I can draw upon you for the amount."

"Really, my lord, I cannot think of your advancing money for me," said Sir Edward; "it is infinitely too much to devote your time, health, talents, and energies for one who has

no claim on your lordship—but to advance money besides, would be impossible.”

“ Oh ! don’t be squeamish, Sir Edward ; a few thousand pounds one way or other is no great object to either of us, I hope, and I can draw upon you at sight when I need the repayment.”

“ But your lordship must allow me to place some money on account at your banker’s to meet the expenses of the journey, and various other arrangements you may feel necessary to make on my behalf.”

“ Oh ! I will not contradict you, Sir Edward, about such a *bagatelle* as that ; but on second thoughts, nothing should be done through bankers. Just give me a cheque for 200*l.* and I will send Scrope for it to-morrow ; so that hereafter nothing may be traced.”

“ Better say 500*l.*,” said Sir Edward.

“ No — no — no : what should I do with 500*l.*, Sir Edward ? Posting and post-boys, hotels, and a dinner or two, do not require 500*l.* Make it 200*l.*, or 300*l.*, if you will ; but 200*l.*, is abundant.”

So Sir Edward wrote a cheque for 300*l.*, payable to himself or bearer, and placed it in the hands of Lord Swainton, with feelings of unaffected gratitude.

“I do not know how to thank you enough, my lord,” said Sir Edward.

“Don’t talk about these things. I would travel tens of thousands of miles to keep those rascally Whigs out of Warnstable. Must make sacrifices, you know, Sir Edward, for one’s party. We shall have to fight a hard battle shortly, what with the Polignac administration in France, and the movements of O’Connell in Ireland. England expects every man will do his duty. Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! Beggars description!”

“It would be well, my lord, if every one of us did our duty in the same noble style as your lordship.”

“Come, come, Sir Edward, none of your flattery. Let us join the ladies, and sip some of your most excellent coffee.”

“All right,” whispered Lord Swainton to Sir Felix, as he passed by his chair to ap-

proach the Miss Clappertons; and Sir Felix smiled satisfaction.

“I hope, ladies,” said Scrope, “we are to have some music.”

“A perfect Pan is Scrope after music,” said his lordship; “a Jew’s-harp, a hurdy-gurdy, a Highland bagpipe, a triangle, musical bells, linnets’ notes, even his own voice,—all delight him. He only wants cloven feet to make him Pan No. 2. Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! Beggars description!”

“You might as well have said an Apollo, my lord,” replied Scrope; “for many a time in the Highlands, if I have not made the woods leap and the forests dance, I have made the lasses jig.”

The Miss Clappertons played some duets, which Lord Swainton called divine. Scrope sang some Irish melodies most delightfully, in the opinion of the ladies; and Montague made them all laugh most heartily, as well as himself, with

“Have you ever seen little Lord John
At a Bedford town election?”

and with another,

“My dearest O’Connell, what think you of Ireland?”

“Now for a round game,” said Sir Edward; and Sir Felix was very lucky at Speculation.

It was past one before the drawing-room was forsaken; and the new west-end servant at Clapham Hall could not understand what Sir Edward meant when he informed him on entering his service, that he kept early hours and little company. “*Nameporte*, as Lord Harry used to say after his French valet, who taught him to speak his nasty language grammatically,” muttered Sir Edward’s fashionable servant; “*nameporte* (*n’importe*), it will be all one and the same thing at the end of the year,—but there goes *two*, and so I must go *too*,—and that *too* will be *to* bed.”

Scrope left by eight in the morning.

Montague waited for Lord Swainton; and together they entered Sir Edward’s post-chariot for Long’s Hotel, from whence the latter was to proceed on that same afternoon

to the Rookery of Sir Oscar Morbleu, in order to carry into effect his plans for the borough of Warnstable; and Clapham Hall and its amiable inmates became once more cool, calm, and collected.

CHAPTER V.

Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meagre herbage, fleshless, lank, and lean ;
Such o'er thy level turf, Newmarket, stray,
And there, with other blacklegs, find their prey.

CRABBE.

“ NICE prosy people,” said Montague to Lord Swainton, as the carriage drove from the door of Clapham Hall. “ These city people always amuse me. To conceal their origin, or seek to make you forget it, they speak of money as we should of millinery, with a nose turned up and a mouth turned down, as if it were the most despicable thing in creation, wholly unworthy of being picked up, and hardly entitled to the honour of being trodden under their feet. Just now, before starting, your friend Sir Edward called me aside into the billiard-room, and said, ‘ Pray, may I ask your opinion of this billiard-table? You have tried it this morning, and I saw at once by your

manner of handling the cue that you are an excellent judge. I should like to have the best billiard-table in this part of the country—expense is no object.’—‘I think you have already the best, Sir Edward,’ I replied, ‘and further expense would be useless.’ He was quite delighted, and assured me he should be most proud to cultivate my acquaintance. And now, my good Lord, as we have begun together, let us go on together. Clapperton must have his seat, and we must feather our nests.”

“That’s precisely how I understand it,” said Lord Swainton. “Head-quarters at Long’s, to secure his election, and for the despatch of out-voters in case of a contest. You must make *your* head-quarters there. Two sitting-rooms and a bed-room—a good table, and civil Dempster to wait on you. We will make these arrangements *sur le champ*; and as Clapperton gave me *carte blanche* and a cheque for 300*l.*, that will do for starting. Warnstable will cost him more than 6000*l.* unless I can succeed better than I expect with Morbleu. But whether six or ten, the seat must be secured, and the rest leave to me.”

“ Oh, once get him in,” replied Montague, “ his delight would know no bounds, and he would be ours for life.”

“ Yes, for life,” said Lord Swainton with much energy and satisfaction; and his little eyes became radiant with anticipation.

“ This travelling-carriage he has also placed at my disposal till the election is over, and as long afterwards as I may require it; for he added, ‘ he could not think of allowing my wheels to be worn out in his service.’ ‘ My wheels,’ I could scarcely refrain from exclaiming, ‘ have taken to their heels long ago.’ Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! Beggars description!”

“ We had better proceed first to the banker’s,” said Montague, “ and get the cheque changed. Three hundred pounds are three hundred pounds in such piping times of peace as these, with the season before us and scarcely a stiver in one’s purse. Never throw a chance away.”

“ To the Horse Guards,” said Lord Swainton to Sir Edward’s coachman, who was sent

up with the best bays to drive his lordship about everywhere, procure post-horses for the afternoon, and start the post-carriage and his lordship from Long's for the Rookery of Sir Oscar.

“I will not drive to Drummond's, Montague, for Clapperton's servant may know his master's bankers, and report that our first visit was made there; but will step thither whilst you call on Lord H——, or leave your card; after that, to Downing Street, where I will leave a P.P.C. for our Home Secretary, which I will explain hereafter, and secure his favour if I add a new vote to his phalanx at the opening of the next campaign, which promises to be a hot one.”

“You are certainly the prince of tacticians, Swainton. It's a lamentable thing a man of your talent and address should not have millions at your disposal.”

“Never fear,—never fear, Montague,” replied his lordship. “What say you to more moderate wishes, in the shape of brother-in-law to Sir Edward?”

“I’ve no idea of his fortune, or of those of his sisters,” said Montague; “and it’s much more difficult to learn those things of City people than it is of our own class in society. They have no antecedents, no hereditary bailiffs, or family solicitors, or land-stewards, to make one’s friends;—and most of their money is in the funds.”

“But if they have no antecedents, they have no mortgages; if they have no hereditary bailiffs, they have no bum-bailiffs either; no Fi-fa’s to look after, or insolent and running usurers to oppress them,” retorted his lordship: “so take you the younger, and I the elder Miss Clapperton, and put up with 3000*l.* a-year. Beggars description!”

“Agreed to,” said Montague.

“It’s a bargain,” said Lord Swainton, as the carriage drove up to the Horse Guards.

His lordship proceeded to Drummonds’, the cheque was duly cashed, the 300*l.* found their way into the *oubliettes* of Lord Swainton’s small-clothes,—those pockets which resembled whirlpools, into which, whatever once entered, was gone for ever!

“All right,” said his lordship, as he entered the carriage again. “The clerk asked me my name, and I said Clapperton.”

“Why so?” asked Montague.

“Because, in the event of an election committee to unseat Sir Edward for bribery, I should thus avoid money being traced to me.”

“But what will you do with the notes? You may be traced through them.”

“I have thought of that,” said his lordship, “and have taken 100 sovereigns in gold; the notes I shall change at the Bank of England for gold too. I shall adopt this plan with reference to all the monies which may pass through my hands for this Warnstable election; so that come what may, I may be secure. Ha! ha! ha! But Sir Edward must have his seat for from 6000*l.* to 10,000*l.*; and as to the rest,—never catch a weasel asleep! Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!”

The Duke’s, Sir Robert’s, Lord M—’s and Sir Henry H—’s were all called at in their turns, not that either Lord Swainton or Montague could really boast of their acquaintance, but that an impression had to be made on

the mind of the coachman, who would be sure to report his proceedings to Miss Clappertons' lady's-maid or Sir Edward's valet. House after house, and hotel after hotel, were purposely knocked at, in vain. Card upon card was left with servants, who announced that their owners had not yet arrived in town. And at length the carriage stopped at Long's hotel.

The faithful Dempster, the best waiter in Christendom, made his appearance : rooms were ordered, *a déjeuner à la fourchette*, as substantial as a dinner, was prepared, and nothing was wanted but a travelling servant to accompany his lordship post, to the seat of Sir Oscar Morbleu.

“Dempster,” said his lordship, “this is very provoking,” as the clock struck three; “my servant is taken ill, don't know what it is, sudden and dangerous illness ; I must leave at six, at latest, for Warnstable ; my friend Sir Edward Clapperton sends his carriage and post horses, with his coachman, to see me start at that hour ; but I have no courier, no servant.”

“I know an Italian servant, my lord, who looks remarkably well, and though he speaks but little English he understands all the duties of a courier. He is only two steps off, and would be ready in an hour.”

“Admirable!” replied his lordship; and Signor Raspini was engaged in less than the twinkling of an eye.

“That’s the sort of fellow for me,” said his lordship to Montague; “none of your reading and writing, spelling and curious servants, but a fellow who can hear all and say nothing, who understands you in an instant, but cannot read your letters; who obeys instead of chattering, and feels that he is your servant. I hate your true English coxcomb, who talks about all your affairs, knows all your genealogy, gets the tailor to dun you when he quits your service, and puts all the ready money you entrust to him to the account of his own wages. Whereas, this Raspini, though he is a Signor, will not exchange one word with Sir Edward’s servant, looks more like a *chasseur* than a courier, and will smoke, laugh, and speak of mi lord

Anglais, as though there were but two such in the universe. With such a man as this for one's servant, a frolic, a run-away, a cut and double — everything is possible — for he would keep your secret, never know your right name unless you were fool enough to write it for him, and die in your defence if you only put a few extra shillings in his pocket."

At six to a moment the post carriage-and-four arrived, and Sir Edward's servant entered for orders.

"Here Tom — Jack — Joe — Will — what's your name, here's a sovereign to buy you an ounce of snuff or some pigtail," said his lordship; "and take this note to Sir Edward, with my compliments to himself and the ladies. The note was characteristic of its writer.

"Long's Hotel ; six o'clock.

"DEAR SIR EDWARD,

"In spite of urgent entreaties on the part of my solicitors to remain in town for the Accountant General's office, and notwithstanding still more urgent entreaties from my banker's to conclude some arrangements for investments,

I start in two seconds for the Rookery. Thus I run off with your gold and your carriage; — but to return, I hope, with your credentials or title deeds for M. P. for Warnstable. Mettez moi aux pieds de vos dames. And believe how faithfully I am

“Yours, dear Sir Edward,

“SWAINTON.”

“I must have a fifty-pound note of you,” said Montague, as his lordship was counting his money, and stowing it away in his waistcoat and other pockets.

“I cannot manage that,” said his lordship; “but take twenty pounds now, and the rest when I return to London and have changed the other notes.”

“*C'est bien, mon ami,*” replied Montague, who knew how to take what he could get, and to feel happy with a little.

“*Au revoir,* my lord,” exclaimed Montague, as Dempster and the Italian servant assisted Lord Swainton to his seat in the chariot.

“Very much obliged to you, my lord, and a pleasant journey to your lordship,” said

Sir Edward's coachman, who had not forgotten the *sovereign* civility of his benefactor.

"Sans adieu! Montague. My compliments to Sir Edward and the ladies,—coachman;" and the carriage drove off.

"That's a fine gentleman," said Sir Edward's coachman, "I never drove the like of him before. He beats Sir Edward hollow."

"Sir Edward who?" asked Dempster, who was by no means dissatisfied to learn something of the new guests at Long's.

"Why my master, Sir Edward Clapperton, of Clapham Hall."

"Who is, then, I suppose a friend of his lordship's," inquired Dempster.

"I fancy he is indeed," replied the coachman; "and I wish my master had three hundred such in the year. I shouldn't be coachman long."

"And the gentleman who remains at the hotel; do you know him?"

"Oh, he's a friend of my lord's, I dare say as good as he is: birds of a feather flock together — isn't it so, sir."

“Very often,” said Dempster; “but not always.”

“But I must get home with my horses, and take down a new post chariot from Adams’s,” observed the coachman; “so good night, sir.”

Lord Swainton had a long, wearisome, cold, and, in every respect, disagreeable journey, and when he arrived at the next post town, at the seat of Sir Oscar Morbleu, he was so fatigued with excitement and with travelling, that he resolved on taking a long night’s rest before he made known to Sir Oscar his unexpected arrival.

The next morning his lordship “was himself again,” and despatched his Italian courier on horseback with a note, informing Sir Oscar of the object of his visit and his desire for an interview.

Sir Oscar had by no means a transcendent opinion of his visitor, but he knew that Lord Swainton was clever, quick, energetic, and enterprising; and since the former much wished to dispose of his seat on the best terms he could, before the opening of the Session, (being

apprehensive of a change in the government, in the event of disturbances in France,) he invited his lordship to the Rookery, and begged he would not think of remaining at the inn.

“Come, Sir Oscar, I bring you good news,” said his lordship, as he entered the library at the Rookery, where his host was waiting to receive him; “I have sold your seat—or, at least, I have a buyer. You know I am a man of few words—very few, and you are no *marchand* in these sort of matters. I have a candidate. Young, handsome, wealthy, good family, a Tory to the back-bone, a staunch supporter of the Duke and Sir Robert, good speaker, out-and-out gentleman, man of honour, I’ve known his father before him. He will give you 1500*l.* down on the nail, on your giving me, first, your resignation to the electors of Warnstable, and a letter, signed by yourself, recommending my friend; secondly, a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking for the Chiltern Hundreds; and, thirdly, a written request to some one, to be agreed on, to move for a new writ for the borough:

all this to be kept a secret; your resignation and recommendation of my friend to be published on the same day that the writ is moved for in the House; and all your interest promised for your successor."

"I see but two objections to your conditions, my lord. The first is the sum named. At least 1000*l.* too little. The second is, to the non-publication of my letter of resignation until the day of the moving for the writ."

"I am sorry I took this journey, if that be the case," said his lordship, affecting to regard 2500*l.* as quite out of the question.

"Indeed, I deeply regret it," said Sir Oscar, "but I have refused 2000*l.* to a man whom you know well — and though I would do anything in the world to oblige any friend of yours, my lord, you conceive —."

"Oh, yes!" said Lord Swainton; "I conceive the impossibility of accepting my conditions. If, indeed, you should find any reason to alter your determination, or if other arrangements should not be concluded with sufficient

speed to meet your views, as there is so little time to spare before the Houses meet, I shall be happy to renew our negotiations, that is, provided my friend shall not have suited himself elsewhere. He ! he ! he !”

“ Ah ! indeed, you are very kind to say as much ; but I expect a confidential agent of a gentleman you know well in the sporting world, to be here to-morrow or the next day, and if I had been aware of your intention to come so far, I would have spared you the trouble. The moment I received your letter I invited you to call on my solicitor, Mr. Spark, of the firm of Spark, Flint, and Powder, of Lincoln’s Inn, and I did so to prevent either trouble or misunderstanding.”

“ Let us say no more on the subject, then,” replied Lord Swainton, still affecting great indifference, whilst every nerve in his system vibrated to the anxieties of his mind : for all his plans and hopes depended on the difference of the price which he should give for the seat to Sir Oscar, and the price at which he should sell it again to Sir Edward Clapperton. Lord

Swainton was shown his chamber, reflected on his best course, and finally resolved to keep up an air of indifference, and to endeavour to ascertain who was the confidential agent expected, and for whom he was about to negotiate.

“Young Ward is looking out for a seat, Sir Oscar; perhaps yours might suit him.”

“I have not the honour of his acquaintance,” replied Sir Oscar drily; “but he’s immensely rich.”

“Lord Bourtonbury, the Whig of the old school, wishes for a seat for his eldest son; and he has the ablest agent, Mr. Walter of Grantham, I ever met with in my life.”

“Indeed,” replied Sir Oscar; “I should think Lord Bourtonbury was not troubled with the metallic; as to his Whiggism, he is half a Tory, I think; I know not his son—he does not abound in wealth either, I presume.”

“Not pressed down beneath the weight of gold, I dare say,” said Lord Swainton.

“A gentleman has just arrived, sir, from Grantham, and wishes to see you,” said the

valet as he opened the door, "his name is Walter."

"That is extraordinary," said Lord Swain-ton, who forgot for a moment where he was, who he was, and what he said.

"Do you know him then, my lord?" asked Sir Oscar.

"Oh! yes, I know him well. Keen as a razor — sharp as a black terrier — and a screw withal; but never mind, that's no affair of mine. He unseated one of the sitting members for a borough, whose name shall be nameless, by his own testimony."

"That's a bad trait," said Sir Oscar; "but will your lordship allow me to leave you a few minutes just to welcome him to the Rookery, and do the indispensable civilities?"

"Oh! I beg you will make no excuse," said his lordship; "business, Sir Oscar, business before everything."

In less than five minutes Sir Oscar returned, and said, that it had been agreed between himself and Mr. Walter, that all business should be deferred till the next day, as he was much

fatigued by his journey from Lincolnshire, and feeling rather indisposed had requested to be allowed to retire to rest. This was a joyful respite for his lordship, who at once determined on the expedient of seeking to gain over Mr. Walter for himself and his candidate, by a retainer of 300 sovereigns, thus securing the seat for the price his lordship had offered on his arrival at the Rookery. With Sir Oscar, Lord Swainton conversed on the various subjects which then engaged the public attention, particularly on the state of France ; and eked out in a rather dull and monotonous manner the rest of the day. Before retiring to rest, his lordship sent up his compliments to Mr. Walter, and wished to know if he was well enough just to shake hands with an old friend of his, now named Lord Swainton ? Mr. Walter, who had somewhat recovered from his fatigue, thanks to a warm room, warm bed, and some stimulating refreshments, replied that he should be most happy : and his lordship was ushered into Mr. Walter's room.

“ Why, my dear Walter, I'm sorry to hear

you are so knocked up. What, in the world do you do here, you rogue, in the depth of winter too, and so far removed from the scene of your labours ! ”

“ Upon my word, my lord, I am almost as much astonished as yourself to find myself here ; but I dare say you are aware, that when there ’s a place to be let, there ’s always more than one candidate to fill it.”

“ Ah ! I understand you,” replied his lordship, “ a good retainer — a noble fee — such a journey ought to bring grist to the mill. No doubt Lord Bourtonbury is as generous as he is—”

“ Poor,” said Mr. Walter ; “ but what can one do when applied to, to undertake a journey under such circumstances ? ”

“ Why, make it, to be sure,” said his lordship. “ Only, if his lordship had not been extremely anxious, I know a friend of mine who, if he could effect the purchase on moderate terms, through your intervention, would think it his duty to place 300*l.* at your disposal.”

“ Oh ! as to being very anxious,” retorted Mr. Walter, “ I can hardly say he is very anxious ; especially as he apprehends a dissolution may take place even before the end of the Session, unless French affairs should take another turn ; but your lordship can easily understand that 300*l.* is not a very large sum in a matter of this delicacy.”

“ Say 500*l.*” replied his lordship ; “ and offer Sir Oscar 1200*l.* for his seat.”

“ I thought of offering 1500*l.*” replied Mr. Walter ; “ but that was the outside sum I was authorized to mention, and that on certain conditions as to the time and manner of arranging this matter.”

“ Then a bargain’s a bargain,” said his lordship ; “ offer 1200*l.* for the seat, and no advance on that price. My offer is 1500*l.* ; if he accepts it — well ; then there will be 500*l.* for yourself. If he accepts it not — go on with your negotiations, as I shall not bid higher — and may you make a good affair. A journey from Grantham to this distance in winter is worth 500*l.* or nothing. Ha ! ha ! ha !” And

his lordship and Mr. Walter shook hands. The whole scene occupied but five minutes, and Lord Swainton returned to the drawing-room.

“Dry, clever, close fellow that Walter,” said his lordship to Sir Oscar. “Can make nothing of him. Close as a lady’s heart when she will not have it besieged, Mademoiselle,” turning to Miss Morbleu, who had replied in nothing but monosyllables to all Lord Swainton’s advances.

“I do not know him,” replied Sir Oscar; “but Lord Bourtonbury’s agent must be a man of honour and delicacy.”

“Oh, undoubtedly!” said Lord Swainton; “but close as a snail with his shell on. Eh! eh! eh! Beggars description!”

The evening was dull and tiresome. Neither Lady Morbleu nor her “yes and no” daughter would either understand or enjoy the witticisms of his lordship, and Sir Oscar, who at ordinary times was by no means an unpleasant companion, was in an uneasy and anxious mood respecting his seat and his visitors, fearing, lest

like Beattie's donkey, who starved between two haystacks of equally bewitching odour, he might, in seeking to set one purchaser against another, lose both, and remain to the first day of the Session, when he *must* resign, to accept an office offered him by the Government, with the seat on his hands. At eleven o'clock, Lord Swainton retired to rest, well satisfied with his day's *combinaisons* — and Sir Oscar did not close his eyes all night.

“I thank you for your hospitality and a good night's rest,” Sir Oscar, said his lordship as he entered the breakfast-room; “and now, will you allow me, as the morning is fine and the weather propitious, to tell my courier to have my carriage and horses at the door in an hour.”

“In an hour!” said Sir Oscar, with much uncomfortable surprise; “but what shall we say about Warnstable?”

“Oh! I would not for the world stand in the way of poor Walter, you know. A commission, or rather two, are matters of some importance to him. He is an admirable elec-

tion agent. He knows well the value of all this sort of property. He has come all the way from Grantham; and doubtless his offers will please you."

"But stop, my lord, and see," said Sir Oscar; "your lordship arrived first — and should have the preference."

"Oh! you're very kind, Sir Oscar, but I beg you will only consult your own interests. Friendships in business are out of the question. I have taken a run down here to oblige a friend, and it has afforded me the double gratification of renewing my acquaintance with you, and of forming that of your amiable lady and accomplished heiress.

"You are exceedingly obliging," replied Sir Oscar; "and as your lordship appears anxious to return to London, I will have, with your permission, half an hour's chat with Mr. Walter before any decision shall be come to."

"Oh! half an hour, or an hour, or even longer, is of no sort of importance," said his lordship; "only, if Mr. Walter is the buyer, the sooner I return the better, as my

friend has another seat in view, which in some respects would suit him much better. But I advised him first to seek to enter into arrangements with you, as I knew he could not fall into *such* hands in any other part of the kingdom."

"You are really too good. I thank you most sincerely," replied Sir Oscar ;—and Mr. Walter made his appearance.

Lady Morbleu was as silent and Miss Morbleu as monosyllabic at breakfast as they had been the previous day, and though his lordship perpetrated some very capital puns they were perfectly enigmatical to all except Mr. Walter, who had a keen sense of the ludicrous, as well as a good appetite for the splendid breakfast with which he feasted more senses than one, on the morning in question.

When the breakfast was terminated, Sir Oscar and Mr. Walter adjourned to the library.

"Affairs look gloomy," said Mr. Walter ; "a dissolution is expected to take place next summer. The seat is not worth, then, more

than one session's purchase. I am prepared to offer you 1200*l.*, Sir Oscar, on condition that the writ is moved for on the first day of the session, and that not a word transpires on the subject to the electors prior to that period."

"2000*l.* I have already refused Mr. Walter, and I am surprised Lord Bourtonbury should think of making me such an offer. Those terms are inadmissible."

"But, Sir Oscar, though in ordinary times I should concur in your opinion, I assure you that I could not go beyond that price at the present moment; and I have a full conviction that the offer I make you is the best you will now receive. I am sorry to hear you did not accept that of 2000*l.* Perhaps it was made before the appointment of the Polignac Cabinet in France."

"Indeed you are mistaken," said Sir Oscar; "but with your permission I will just speak two words to a farmer who is waiting to see me."

"With Lord Swainton," thought Mr. Walter, "and no farmer."

“Oh, by all means, Sir Oscar; and as you know my ultimatum, I will, with your permission, take a walk in the park and return in an hour.

“Be it so,” said Sir Oscar; “and I wish you a pleasant blow and a healthy ramble.”

“My lord,” said Sir Oscar, as he rejoined Lord Swainton in the breakfast parlour, who was engaged in scribbling letters to Scrope, the little Witch, Montague, and half-a-dozen other personages of importance; “the seat is yours for 2000 guineas. Some of the conditions of Mr. Walter do not please me.”

“Sir Oscar, 1500*l.* is the outside farthing, and you and I will not discuss such matters any further.”

“Then the seat is yours,” said Sir Oscar.

“If that is your determination,” replied his lordship, “we will prepare the documents.”

“And transmit them to my agents in London,” said Sir Oscar.

“Oh, no, there will be no necessity for that. I will become pledge for the 1500*l.* if you will give me shelter, wind and water tight, during

the time necessary for the exchange of couriers. To prevent delay, I will send an express; and to avoid any subsequent discussion, I will also order gold. Beggars description !”

“ My lord, I leave all these minor arrangements to your lordship’s good offices and able management,” replied Sir Oscar; “ and instead of days, should be delighted to detain you weeks at the Rookery.”

The letter of resignation, addressed to the electors, was then drawn up; another letter, applying for the Chiltern Hundreds, was prepared; and a third, authorizing the moving for a new writ, was also deposited in his lordship’s hands.

The Italian courier was called in. His lordship spoke to him in his own language, directed him to prepare himself with a horse, and with a postillion to accompany him in an hour, to proceed towards London; and his despatches were placed in his hands at one in the afternoon, containing the following letter to Sir Edward Clapperton:—

“ MY DEAR SIR EDWARD,

“ I forward you by my Italian courier, with the greatest imaginable despatch, the agreeable and satisfactory intelligence that I have arranged with Sir Oscar Morbleu for Warnstable. I found Mr. Ward had been before me; and Lord Bourtonbury’s agent I have had to buy off with a present of 500*l.* Notwithstanding this wholly unexpected malcontre, I have succeeded for 3000*l.*, all included; and am now in pledge for you for that amount. I enclose you copies of all our documents. The 3000*l.* I will advance for you, if you desire it; but if you prefer otherwise, (though it is wholly immaterial to me,) then forward 3000*l. in gold.* There must be no Bank-notes in this matter. This is a *sine quâ non* with Sir Oscar; and I could not but acknowledge the justice of his demand. The best mode of transmitting the 3000*l.* will be by sending it down in a post-chaise, in the charge of some confidential person, and my Italian courier will accompany him. When these arrangements are made, we will meet at

Bath, and take the necessary steps for your being the first in the field the instant Sir Oscar's resignation is made known at Warnstable. If your agent shall not arrive within forty-eight hours from this moment, I shall pay the 3000*l.* for you, and draw on my own bankers for the amount in gold. Not an hour is to be lost. Sir Oscar has given me three days to complete the arrangements; and I have ordered my courier to proceed to Sir Felix Montague, with despatches for him in the event of your being absent, or of your not being prepared with the required sum, that he may forward it by my own courier without delay. Assure the ladies of my unaffected friendship, and yourself, of my sincere regard.

“Yours faithfully,

“SWAINTON.”

“Sharp's the word, and quick's the motion,” said his lordship, as he placed 30 sovereigns in the hands of his courier, and bade him arrive, without fail, at Clapham Hall by eight o'clock the following morning.

“ Si, si, signor,” said Raspini, and the whips cracked, the courier galloped, and the postilion followed with amazing rapidity.

“ That ’s an affair finished,” said Lord Swainton, as he walked arm-in-arm with Sir Oscar Morbleu, on the fine terrace in front of the Rookery.

“ I hope so,” said Sir Oscar.

“ I am sure so,” replied Lord Swainton ; and his lordship soon saw with pleasure Mr. Walter start for Grantham, with a promissory note in his pocket which he had signed in his favour for 500*l.*, and payable one month after date at Long’s hotel, London.

CHAPTER VI.

Gold ! gold ! gold ! gold !
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Hoarded, barter'd, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled.

HOOD.

THE morning on which Scrope, his father, and Montague left Clapham Hall, was devoted by the Clappertons to conversation on the rapid and wondrous events of the two or three past days. All agreed that Lord Swainton was "a most bewitching man," that Scrope was "a very quiet gentlemanly fellow," and that Sir Felix Montague was "an out-and-out man of the world."

Lord Swainton they nicknamed "beggars description," Scrope they called "my son Sir Edward," and Montague they agreed to designate "the man of fashion." All the jokes of his lordship were repeated over and over again, all the peculiarities of Scrope and of his quiet

lady afforded abundant matter for conversation; and as to Sir Felix, though his visit had been a short one, he had evidently left behind him very favourable impressions which were felt by the youngest Miss Clapperton even more than by her sister.

“The most gentlemanly man I ever saw,” said the youngest Miss Clapperton.

“Yes, he is very gentlemanly,” responded her sister.

“Ah! not merely very gentlemanly, for of Scrope and Lord Swainton you may say that; but Sir Felix is the most gentlemanly person I ever saw.”

“Hearts beating and eyes meeting, and all that sort of thing,” said Sir Edward.

“Oh! Edward, what a plague you are; one can never admire a man without your making it out directly that one is in love with him. You used to tease me about the Captain, but, oh, what a difference between the Captain and Sir Felix! One could hardly believe they both belonged to the same genus.”

“Oh! that’s too bad,” replied Sir Edward; “I confess I was not pleased with Macfarlane yesterday; but I am satisfied he was taken

by surprise, and was rather annoyed at having made us a visit in his accustomed every-day frock-coat, and without a change for either the dinner or the evening. I like our *new brooms* very much ; but we have had a good deal of service out of the old one."

" Well, give me 'beggars description' if I must have either of them," said the eldest Miss Clapperton ; " what say you, Edward ? "

" Oh ! I think so too, I confess," replied Sir Edward ; " besides I take it that Sir Felix is a man of very different fortune to that of Lord Swainton. I shall never forget his truly unaffected and gentlemanly offer to advance the 3000*l.* necessary for the seat at Warnstable, if it should be momentarily inconvenient to myself to do so. I should like to have heard of such an offer from one of your *city men*. They would have required bonds, warrants of attorney, judgments, bills of sale, promissory notes, and insurance of lives at the Pelican or elsewhere, to guarantee the due and punctual repayment of the money ; and there would have been deeds, and stamps, and lawyers' bills and consultations, and medical certificates, and I know not what else besides ;

whereas, when a peer of the realm undertakes to make important arrangements for you, he gives his time, his money, his interest and patronage, and desires nothing in return but the pleasure of knowing he serves his king and his country by assisting the political party to which he has attached himself, from a conviction that it is the most favourable to the conservative interests of church and state. That is true nobility."

The eldest Miss Clapperton was enchanted with this eulogium passed on her dear Lord Swainton, and unhesitatingly declared "that notwithstanding the great difference in their respective ages, if Lord Swainton should offer her his hand she would give him her heart without a moment's hesitation."

"There was another trait in the conduct of his lordship yesterday which delighted me beyond measure," continued Sir Edward, "for it contrasted so strongly with the city mode of conducting such matters. When I insisted (and I really was obliged to insist) on placing some money at his lordship's disposal for travelling expenses, and all that sort of thing, he would not suffer me to write a cheque for

more than 300*l.* and even begged it might only be 200*l.* How different would Mr. Alderman Cleggalt, or Messrs. Black, Ease, and Black, have proceeded to business. But in three minutes all was settled, and even so great was his delicacy of feeling, that to prevent hereafter any unpleasant discussions before a committee of the House of Commons respecting my purchasing a seat in parliament, or rather the interest of the sitting member, he said that Scrope should go and receive the cheque, and that my own name might be inserted in the body of it."

"Did he, indeed!" said the eldest Miss Clapperton, with great emphasis, and no lack of feeling. "You are quite right, Sir Edward; none but noblemen can thus act. Such conduct and such principles must be hereditary. Don't you remember reading how poor Lord Sykes, when he wished to borrow some money of an usurer, in order to assist him in procuring a seat in parliament, was compelled by the wretched fellow to pay him I think twenty-five per cent. interest, in the form of an annuity, and, besides that, to insure his life?"

"To be sure I do," said Sir Edward; "and

I also remember that in spite of this nice bargain, his lordship returned him principal and interest in *money* at the full value, though the usurer only advanced him the amount in the shape of brooches, pins, and rings, which he was obliged to sell at so low a rate that he did not realize more than forty per cent."

"But now," said the eldest Miss Clapperton, as they sat after dinner over wine and filberts, —the latter carefully preserved in hermetically-sealed canisters, so as to have them as fresh in December as in October,—“I want really to have a little serious talk with you about your former love affair with Maria Catherwood. Certainly she is a very sweet girl—I love her dearly—and whatever may be our future destiny, and it may be very brilliant, whatever I can do to render her happy I should always feel it my duty to do; but to prevent anything like reproach afterwards, or coolness towards them, or from them towards us,—a thing which would make me quite wretched,—I do think that you ought, either yourself, or by me if you will,—and I am sure I am willing to do anything for you,—to let her understand that the love that boys feel and poets feign, you still

cherish for her, but nothing more than this, and that she is quite at liberty to accept any proposal made to her, as you consider yourself equally free, should you think fit to settle down in life and cease to be a bachelor. And I will tell you why I mention this. When you were at Bath, the Edwards's came down and spent a long day here, and amongst other things, we talked, of course, of the Catherwoods. Jane Edwards said, 'Oh, I've got a piece of news to tell you. Who do you think has made an offer to Maria?' We guessed every one we could think of, and were at last obliged to give it up. 'Young Price,' said Jane; 'but Maria declined the offer of course.'—'Why of course, Jane?' I asked. 'I see no reason why she should have refused. For my part, it is of all others the match I should have deemed the most suitable.'—'Why you are joking, my dear,' replied Jane. 'The most suitable! Come, come, that is a very good joke indeed, and from the sister of Sir Edward, too!'—'Sir Edward,' I replied; 'why, what has Sir Edward to do with it, Jane?'—'Why, my dear girl, is not Sir Edward engaged to

Maria?’—‘No more engaged to Maria than he is to you, Jane; and I believe he loves one as much as he does the other. Edward feels towards you as he does towards Maria. Have we not all been brought up children together? Whatever his future sphere may be, he will never cease to love the playmates and the friends of his earliest days.’ Jane expressed her surprise at what I said, but added ‘that she thought you, Edward, viewed the matter in a very different light to that in which it was regarded by me.’”

“Not very different, my dear sister,” replied Sir Edward. “When you said, however, that I loved Jane Edwards as well as Maria Catherwood, you embellished the picture. But it is quite true that I consider both her and myself at perfect liberty to make such matrimonial arrangements as we may find most conducive to our happiness, and that, according to her own proposal, this liberty is most absolute.”

“I should go much more happily to Bath,” said Miss Clapperton, “if you would give me your authority to say as much as this, in the

most unreserved manner, to Maria herself, to-morrow or the next day, as we propose spending an hour or two with them before our departure; for nothing would grieve me more than to have it said hereafter, when you are in parliament and moving in the best circles, that you had acted unkindly or unhandsomely to Maria."

"Unkindly or unhandsomely to Maria!" exclaimed Sir Edward; "why I should as soon think of behaving so to you, my dear sister — are we not all sisters and brothers together?"

"To be sure we are, and nothing more," replied Miss Clapperton; "and this short conversation has relieved me from a weight of anxiety which has oppressed me these last few days, and which has diminished the pleasure afforded to me in the society of your new acquaintances, my dear Edward. But now I know all your mind, I am quite at rest."

"Of course you will say nothing to annoy Maria," replied Sir Edward; "and the proposed conversation with her on the subject you will take care shall appear quite natural and as a matter of course, and not as if you were the bearer of any message from me to her."

“Trust to me, Edward — I love Maria too well to distress her for a moment; but your honour, and her happiness, may perhaps require me to be frank. And as she has refused so eligible a match as young Price, and Jane Edwards has more than once hinted at the reason, it is high time there should be no more misconception on this subject.”

Sir Edward and the youngest sister were both loud in their praises of their eldest sister's conduct on this and on all important occasions, and the evening passed off very agreeably.

The next day, Sir Edward went to London, to arrange many private matters connected with his approaching departure for Bath, as well as to supply himself with ample ready money means to meet any demand which might be made on him by Lord Swainton with reference to the borough of Warnstable. He sold out some stock, and had a balance of 5200*l.* in his banker's hands.

The Miss Clappertons left Clapham Hall at the early hour of eleven, made an endless variety of purchases at Howell and James's, and then proceeded to make their P. P. C. visits, and leave cards when their friends or

acquaintances were either invisible, or perhaps really not at home.

“My dear Maria,” said the eldest Miss Clapperton to Maria Catherwood, when quite unintentionally they were left alone in the drawing-room by the rest of the family and the youngest Miss Clapperton, who had all gone downstairs to look at a new and noisy parrot who was singing and whistling in the dining-room,—“I am half, but only half, angry with you, and have a great mind to give you a scolding.”

“Give *me* a scolding!” exclaimed the pretty pet Maria—“Ah, I hope not—it would almost break my heart to have a scolding from you. But I see by your smiles it is nothing very serious: pray tell me directly—I am dying to know.”

“Cannot you guess?” asked Miss Clapperton. “I think you can, Maria.”

“No, indeed, I cannot,” said Maria, with that air of real truth which cannot be counterfeited.

“Well then, why did you not tell me that Charles Price had made you an offer?”

“Oh! is that all, my dear?” replied the

light and soft beauty, as her cheeks burned with blushes and emotion; "I am glad it's of no more importance than that."

"Why, what do you mean?" inquired Miss Clapperton; "of no more importance than *that*. All I can say, Maria, is, that if I had had such an offer, I should have told you."

"Oh! it was a thing of no importance at all," said Maria, still blushing more than before; "pray who told you?"

"Jane," answered Miss Clapperton; "and she added, that you had refused him."

"To be sure I did," said Maria, turning somewhat pale, and looking like a lily at sunset.

"Why, what is the matter with him?" asked Miss Clapperton, determined on not letting the matter drop here. "Of all the City men with whom I am acquainted, I know none I should have preferred to young Price."

"But if I am not fond of City men, my dear," said Maria, slightly blushing.

"Ah! then your affections are engaged elsewhere," replied Miss Clapperton; "and if that be the case, I have indeed the right to scold you for not having told me."

Maria turned pale, quite pale, and looked most lovely.

“I am sure I did not say I had placed my affections anywhere, or on any one,” said Maria; “and so why should you suspect me?”

“Because you have refused so admirable an offer as young Price’s: with good manners, fortune, education, and highly respectable family. Even Sir Edward, who considers himself your brother, expressed his surprise that so eligible an offer should have been rejected.”

“Did he?” asked Maria; “and——”

At this moment the door opened, and the youngest Miss Clapperton and the Catherwoods returned from the parrot. Maria endeavoured to conceal her agitation, but she could not wholly succeed.

“My dear Maria,” asked Mrs. Catherwood, “why, what’s the matter with you? How pale you look, my dear. Come here, love. How cold you are! Why you tremble!”

“Oh! it’s nothing, mamma,—nothing at all. It will go off in a moment. I am so sometimes,—it never lasts long,—there, I’m better now!” and she smiled as beautifully as she was wont to do. The effort she had made to

restrain her tears had caused this nervous irritation. Miss Clapperton perceived it with sorrow. It was evident that up to that moment Maria had not considered herself quite so free as she had begged Sir Edward to be, and that she had hoped he had not wholly taken her at her word. But then Miss Clapperton observed with satisfaction, that Maria afterwards joined in the conversation on general topics, as well as respecting Sir Edward, the house at Bath, Lord Swainton, &c. &c. in her accustomed mirthful and sweet manner; and she hoped, against hope, that as the ice had now been broken, and as Maria knew how the Clappertons, and above all, how Sir Edward, looked on the whole affair, that henceforth there would be a total forgetfulness of their merely juvenile attachment. Mrs. Catherwood erroneously imputed, in her own mind, these slight attacks of feeling or of indisposition, on the part of Maria, to her regret at having somewhat abruptly refused the hand of young Price; and, as mothers always do in these cases, “she feared Maria had a *cold*.”

“Adieu! dear Maria,” said Miss Clapperton, as she took leave; “I love you tenderly,

and hope your mamma will contrive to bring you down to Bath."

Maria, who, with great strength of mind, had at once secretly resolved not to throw herself in the way of Sir Edward, or to seek to cherish in him a passion which perhaps he no longer felt, replied, "I think that will be impossible."

"I fear so too, my dear Miss Clapperton," said Mrs. Catherwood; "but we shall love you all just as dearly. Remember us all to Sir Edward. Adieu!"

The Clappertons all met at seven in the evening at Clapham Hall, and the dinner was enlivened by the coachman, who being questioned by Sir Edward respecting the proceedings of Lord Swainton and Sir Felix Montague on the previous day, replied to all his inquiries with words of great pomp in honour of his lordship. The fact was, that the "west-end servant" had a holiday given him by Sir Edward, to see his friends in town before leaving for Bath, and the ladies' footman was ill. So the coachman waited at table.

"Indeed, Sir Edward, they went to all the great houses in London. I never saw so many

calls made in one day in my life before ; and all big houses,—all first-rate houses, as the saying is,—quite the richest, greatest, nobleman-like sort of palaces. You know, miss, what I mean,” addressing himself alternately to Sir Edward and his eldest sister ; “and everybody seemed to know him, and he knew everybody. I dare say, miss, his lordship is not a very young man, as the saying is ; and yet he jumped in and out of the carriage like a squirrel. I beg your pardon, Sir Edward,—I mean no offence ; but he was so light, as it were.”

“Yes, his lordship is very active,” replied Sir Edward gravely. “I suppose, however, he did not make your fortune.”

The coachman smiled. “No, not my fortune, Sir Edward, certainly ; by no means : but I should have no objection to do such a day’s work three hundred-and-sixty-five days of every year. Oh ! he’s the most generousest man I ever clapped my eyes on.”

“And pray, my dear sister,” asked Sir Edward of Miss Clapperton, as wine and filberts again amused them at dessert, “have you seen the Catherwoods to-day,—and how are they ?”

“Yes, we saw them, Edward, and remained two hours with them; and found them all quite well, except Maria, who has a little cold. At least, so says Mrs. Catherwood.”

“But what do you say?”

“Why, what her mother says, to be sure. How can I know better than her mother?”

“Come, come, my dear Charlotte,” said Sir Edward; “that won’t do. Let’s have all out, good, bad, or indifferent, or, as the sailors say, all above board.”

“Well, then, Edward, I fear Maria, up to this day, has not considered herself so far released from all engagements with you, as you supposed. But, to my great relief, this is the case no longer.”

“Why, what did she say, then?” asked Sir Edward, with some emotion; and Miss Claperton related, with scrupulous fidelity, every word that had passed.

“And how did you leave her?” asked Sir Edward.

“Evidently relieved, like myself, of a great weight off her mind,” answered Miss Claperton; “and now we may all go to Bath as

soon as you like; and for my part, I shall go determined to be happy."

"She did not weep?" asked Sir Edward.

"Oh no, indeed!" replied Miss Clapper-ton; "beautiful and tender as she is, she has too much energy of character to weep. Besides which, she knew perfectly well that you were not under any sort of obligation to each other beyond that of pure friendship; her emotion was only that of one who is in the act of formally forgetting or getting rid of the reminiscences of some girlish attachment, more imagined than expressed."

"Not exactly so," replied Sir Edward; "for you know, four years ago, when about nineteen, I made her an offer of marriage."

"Yes: but she entreated you to consider that offer as no longer binding."

"Precisely so," replied Sir Edward; "and nothing more has since transpired."

"And nothing more will transpire, I hope, dear Edward," retorted his sister; "go and call on the Catherwoods, behave just as you have always done; talk, laugh, joke, quiz, and kiss, as brother and sisters, son and mamma, and

then our friendship for that charming family will remain as it ought to do, wholly unchanged, and placed, as it should be, on its proper footing."

Sir Edward promised that this should be the case, and as all were wearied with their multiplied avocations during the day, they retired at an earlier hour than usual to their *chambres à coucher*.

To the inexpressible annoyance of all the servants at Clapham Hall, they were disturbed the next morning, a cold and wet December day, by a violent and protracted ringing at the great bell. The Newfoundland dog barked furiously. It was scarcely five. There were several voices to be heard. One seemed like that of a foreigner, another was that of the Clapham Common patrol, and the third was a sharp shrill voice, which harmonized well enough with the wind that whistled among the trees.

The gardener and the coachman at length made their appearance.

"I be Signor Raspini, di courier, di mi lord Anglais," said Lord Swainton's courier, as the outer gates were opened for admission.

"I wish you had come a little later, old chap," grumbled the gardener, "whoever you be; but it's no use talking your nasty foreign stuff to me. Tell us in plain downright English who you are, what you are, and what you want?"

"Me explain," said Signor Raspini; "mi Lord Swainton to my Lord Clapham — one packet — me give Lord Clapham."

"Oh! I see what it is," said the patrole; "Lord Swainton has sent this fellow —"

"I be no fellow — I be Signor Raspini, courier to mi lords Anglais, many mi lords Anglais."

"I wish you'd hold your nasty foreign jaw," said the gardener with characteristic politeness, "we don't see any of you foreign devils here; so let this here gentleman explain," pointing to the patrole, "and then we shall get on a little."

"Why, I was going to explain," said the patrole, "that some one, whom this fellow calls Lord Swainton, has sent him with a parcel or packet, or something or other, for your master, whom he calls Lord Clapham, instead of Sir Edward Clapperton; but these

poor creatures, Lord bless 'em, know nothing of no other language than their nasty foreign stuff — so that's all the matter."

"Well, why didn't you come, old chap, with your parcel or packet, a little later, and not rattle up gentlemen's servants at this time o' the morning, in your old Roman Catholic ways? There's none of you are Christians, you are all blind Papists, you are—;" and in this strain, it is more than probable the gardener would have proceeded much longer, to the great annoyance of Signor Raspini, had not the coachman, with the aid of the light of a second lantern, perceived that the courier was the very same gentleman who, but three days previously, had handed in Lord Swinton to his carriage at Long's, or, in plain terms, that he was Lord Swinton's servant.

"Robert," said the coachman, as soon as he had made the discovery; "Robert," addressing himself to the gardener; "do you know who you are talking to? It's the servant, the courier, of Lord Swinton, who I told you I started from Long's Hotel in master's post-chariot. Go along with you, and leave the gentleman to me."

“ I hope no offence, sir,” said the gardener, who began to fear that Signor Raspini might report unfavourably of him to his master, Sir Edward ; “ I hope no offence, sir. I thought it was some of these wandering Italian vagabonds with their palaver. I didn’t know it was a gentleman’s courier.”

“ I be Italian,” said Raspini ; “ I be no vagabond. I tell mi lord.”

“ Get out of the way with you directly,” said the coachman to the gardener ; “ you are only making yourself a fool. Leave this gentleman to me. Follow me, sir, if you please, and I will make a fire in the servants’ hall in the twinkling of an eye. This way, sir, if you please, and, Robert, bring some sticks and make a fire.”

“ I be no gentleman, — I be no vagabond,” said Raspini ; “ I be de courier de mi Lord Swainton. I come so quick, so quick, with great news to mi Lord Clapham !”

“ Clapperton,” said the coachman, “ my friend, not Clapham.”

“ Clapperton,” replied Raspini ; “ ’tis just di same. I want speak to mi lord.”

“He is in bed,” said the coachman.

“Me must see mi lord directlek,” said Raspini.

“That is impossible,” replied the coachman.

“Me have a thing for him,” said Raspini.

“Very likely,” replied the coachman.

“Me must tell him de great news from mi lord.”

“Not at five in the morning,” said the coachman.

“He will lose de tousand pounds, if mi lord not get this (producing the despatches) directlek.”

“I’ll go and call Sir Edward’s servant,” said the coachman; and, a little before six, the fashionable west-end valet made his appearance.

The valet soon understood the whole matter, and desiring that the servants might all be called up instantly, carried up the despatches to his master, lighted a fire in his bed-room, placed wax-lights and the writing-desk of Sir Edward near the fire, then took care of the courier, and agreed fully with him, “that the gardener, coachman, and all the rest of these country servants, knew nothing of polite life.”

“Wonderful man !” exclaimed Sir Edward, as he read the letter of his lordship, and the copies of the documents it contained. “I must be at my bankers’ by nine, speak to them about this affair of gold, and consult them how I shall send it to his lordship.”

“Let the courier come up,” said Sir Edward, when his valet retired ; and Sir Edward questioned him as to the time of his leaving the Rookery, the wonderful rapidity with which he had performed his journey, and placed in his hand a five-pound note. The courier then retired to rest, and was requested to be ready by noon to proceed in a post-chaise, with an agent of Sir Edward, to the seat of Sir Oscar Morbleu.

The Miss Clappertons rose two hours earlier than usual that morning. They perused with rapture the letter and the enclosures, and congratulated their brother on his expected title of M.P. for the borough of Warnstable.

“I cannot tell whom to send with the 3000*l.*,” said Sir Edward. “I hardly like to trust so large an amount in gold to the Italian courier of his lordship ; and yet I would not for the world appear to distrust him.”

“Cannot you ask George Catherwood?” said the eldest Miss Clapperton; “it would be an agreeable journey for him. Of course you would pay all expenses, and, as he knows Italian, he would converse with the courier.”

“A capital notion, that!” replied Sir Edward; “and I can, at the same time, take leave of Maria and the rest of the family.”

Sir Edward hastened to London, made the arrangements he proposed, and, at two o'clock, George Catherwood and the courier started in a hired carriage and pair on their way to Lord Swainton. Sir Edward hired a carriage for the journey, to avoid the constant shifting of the box containing the gold, and George Catherwood was instructed to feast the courier on the road, to deliver the chest to Lord Swainton, and not to accept any invitation to remain at the Rookery, but simply to leave the chest, and return post, but more leisurely, to London. Sir Edward begged of him to spend a day or two at Bath, requested him to make his house at Milsom Street his head-quarters, and assured him that no one would ever be more welcome to his present or future resi-

dences than the members of the Catherwood family.

To Lord Swainton, Sir Edward wrote as follows :—

“ MY VERY DEAR LORD,

“ It would be quite impossible for me to express to you, in any language, my debt of obligation to you. I only hope that you will, at some future time, command my services; not that by them I can hope to repay you for your actually unmerited kindness, but only to enable me to give some practical proof of my gratitude and devotedness. I have requested a young friend of mine, who is about to spend a few days at Bath, at my house in Milsom Street, to see the box with 3000*l.* in gold, delivered into your hands, but, as he is wholly ignorant of the object of this remittance, as well as of the amount transmitted, I have begged him simply to leave the money with your lordship, and then to withdraw. My sisters have received your kind recollections with much pleasure, and they, with myself, long once more to enjoy your

truly delightful society. Clapham Hall has sunk back to its old humdrum monotony, and you alone can revive it. But, I believe, when next we meet, it is to be at Bath,—is it not? I wait your orders. Believe me,

“My dear lord,

“Yours most gratefully and faithfully,

“E. CLAPPERTON.”

“I think my seat is pretty well assured now,” said Sir Edward, as he conversed with his sisters after dinner.

“I think so, indeed,” replied the eldest Miss Clapperton; “but what said Maria to you?”

“Oh, she was the same as ever. No difference. I thought she turned rather pale when I went in; but it might have been fancy. Mrs. Catherwood made me sing my poor dear father’s favourite song,

‘I’ve kissed and I’ve prattled with fifty fair maids,
But the maid of the mill for me.’

And we parted as we always do, the best of friends; — though the best of friends must part.”

“And therefore so must we,” said the eldest Miss Clapperton, and all once more regained their bed-rooms.

There we will leave them for the present, wishing them pleasant dreams and rosy slumbers.

CHAPTER VII.

There be that can pack cards, and yet cannot play well ; so there are some that are good in canvasses and factions, that are otherwise weak men.

BACON.

LORD SWAINTON felt himself rather uneasy at "The Rookery," for although Sir Oscar did all he could to render himself and his residence agreeable, it was one of those houses where no one is ever at home, because the permanent inmates do not appear to be so themselves. Few persons ever remained there more than two or three days, and the period for visiting the Rookery which even these preferred, was when the neighbouring races rendered out-door amusements indispensable. It was not that Lady Morbleu was either ignorant or unamiable, nor was it that Miss Morbleu was deficient either in education or good manners ; but the whole family was naturally cold,

formal, and ceremonious, and only associated with a few of the highest and leading families in the county. Sir Oscar found his life monotonous, and got into parliament. When in parliament he found that life too expensive, for few boroughs required more constant expenditure than Warnstable. He applied to government for office, and waited year after year for the accomplishment of repeated promises. The truth was, that the vote of Sir Oscar in parliament was worth a vast deal more than either his name or support out of it, and the government was, therefore, by no means anxious to comply with his wishes. But as prospects of change became more probable, as the effects of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill were beginning to be felt, and as some cries for Reform were heard, the prayers of Sir Oscar were at length listened to, and a seat at a government board of some importance was secured to him. The expensive borough of Warnstable he resolved therefore to resign, and either to come in on very moderate terms for a government borough, or to remain out of parliament altogether. On this point he determined to obey directions

from head-quarters, but as he had the certainty of receiving the appointment a few days after the meeting of parliament, and, as that appointment would necessitate a new election, he took preparatory measures for securing to himself the return of a portion of those thousands of pounds which he had expended in the borough in question. Sir Oscar was not pleased with the condition of resigning his vote before the Houses met, and of having the writ moved for on the first day of the session. He would have preferred greatly to have received his diploma of office before he took any of these preliminary steps ; but as both Mr. Walter and Lord Swainton had insisted on the same condition, he was obliged to yield, and nothing more than the receipt by him of the 1500*l.* was necessary to complete all arrangements.

Lord Swainton was most anxious for the return of the courier. He feared that in his letter to Sir Edward he had not been sufficiently explicit respecting the transmission of the 3000*l.* He counted every hour, and then every minute of the time. He walked, talked, read, rose early, sat up much later than

the Morbleu family were accustomed to do, played short whist, rallied the ladies, discussed every old and new question of politics with the chief of the house, drank of every wine, sipped every liqueur, wrote letters without end, and of course dated them all from the Rookery, so that the acquaintances of his lordship were astonished to find him one day at Sir Edward Clapperton's seat, in Surrey, and a few days afterwards two hundred miles off, at the Rookery of Sir Oscar. Many of them wondered at his new accession of "dear friends," never heard of before ; but all attributed these freaks to some improvement in his purse. How he had contrived thus to amend his fortune, they could not tell ; but they were fully aware that his head was always scheming, and that he gained more than he lost—at play.

Sir Oscar kept some good horses, and in order to divert themselves, and shake off the *ennui* of waiting for the arrival of the courier and the funds, he proposed to his lordship a ride to Warnstable on horseback. The proposition was accepted, and, as the afternoon was bright and clear, though somewhat frosty, the horses arrived at the door at two o'clock. But Lord

Swainton had scarcely taken his seat in his saddle, when he perceived driving up most furiously towards the door of the Rookery, through the small park of Sir Oscar, a carriage and pair, and in a moment afterwards the head of the Italian courier popped out of the window.

“They must have travelled amazingly fast, Sir Oscar,” said his lordship; “beggars description! — never saw post-horses gallop so fast in my life.”

The carriage stopped. Young Catherwood alighted: placed in Lord Swainton’s hand the letter of Sir Edward, which the former read with the rapidity with which an eagle pounces on its prey.

“Ah, you are the friend of Sir Edward,” said his lordship.

“Sir Oscar, this young gentleman is the friend of my friend; and is the bearer of what we expected.”

“Pray, walk in,” said Sir Oscar.

“Will you have the goodness to excuse me?” replied George Catherwood, obeying the very letter of his instructions. “I have travelled all night, am much fatigued, and wish to set off to Bath in a few hours. I have only to deliver a

box to his lordship, which the courier will take out of the carriage."

So the courier took out the box, and placed it in the hall.

"But you really must allow me the pleasure of offering you the best that the Rookery can supply," said Sir Oscar, in his most polite manner. "You will find the inn very comfortable, no doubt, but I think we can do a little better for you."

"Yes, yes," said his lordship, "Sir Oscar is right; a few glasses of his champagne and a broiled fowl or so, and the softest bed in the county, will refresh you more than old port, a rump-steak, and a mattress."

"I am greatly obliged to both Sir Oscar and yourself, my lord," replied young Catherwood; "but I ordered my dinner and bed at the inn, and arranged with the master that this post-boy and his horses should take me back again."

"I am extremely sorry," said Sir Oscar.

"I deeply lament your determination," added his lordship, who still kept his eyes steadily fixed on the precious box, which had been placed just within the hall at the door.

Young Catherwood took leave in a minute, leaped into the carriage, and drove off.

“Fine youth that,” said Sir Oscar.

“Admirable ! Beggars description !” replied his lordship, walking rapidly into the hall whilst he pronounced the panegyric.

“May I trouble you to take this into my room ?” asked his lordship of the head footman.

“How heavy it is for so small a box,” observed the footman.

“Yes, it contains some precious ores from America,” said his lordship.

In a few seconds Lord Swainton was left alone with his box. How he opened it no one can tell, for it was well nailed down, and screwed into the bargain, and his lordship had only a pocket-knife, which had been his constant companion for years past, to serve as hammer and screwdriver ; but no carpenter could have been more dexterous, or one-half as expeditious as his lordship ; and 3000 new sovereigns from the Bank met his anxious, but now ravished eyes.

“Beggars description !” repeated his lordship to himself at least fifty times, as he un-

packed each little "rouleau" of fifty sovereigns, and counted them one after the other.

"My lord," said a voice from without, whilst the person who spoke knocked at the door, "my lord, as the letters will be sent off to the post in five minutes, Sir Oscar wishes to know if your lordship has any other letter to send besides those you have left on the hall-table?"

"Oh yes, yes," replied his lordship, "by all means. I will give you a letter in a minute for London;"—and seizing a pen he wrote as follows:—

"This goes for to tell,
That the gold I've received,
With a quickness that's passing belief;—
'All's well that ends well,'
Is my motto and creed,—
And Sir Edward is sure of his seat!

"SWAINTON."

"Beggars description!" said his lordship, as he sealed up the letter, and gave it to the servant who stood outside. "This is quick work with a vengeance. The Rapids are a tool to it. Nothing but lightning to rival it. Steam it beats; balloons are the old heavy vans, two miles an hour on an average, compared with this. Admirable man, Sir Edward!

What a sight ! 3000 sovereigns at once ! Never saw so many Kings' heads in my life before ! and all resemble each other ! Beggars description !” His lordship was, in fact, in an ecstasy, and whenever this was the case he became almost frantic.

“ I will leave this desperately dull, gloomy, cawing, croaking, misanthropic Rookery in less than an hour,” said his lordship, “ but I must first pay a visit to Sir Oscar, and count him out 1500 of these beautiful creatures,”—gazing on the sovereigns as he spoke, if possible, with even increased enthusiasm.

His lordship rang the bell, and asked, if Sir Oscar had gone out.

“ My master is in the library, my lord,” said the servant.

“ Be good enough to inform him that I wish to speak to him there, if he is disengaged ; and tell my courier to have the carriage prepared, and all ready for starting at four.”

“ The courier has just gone to lie down, my lord ; shall I disturb him ?”

Lord Swainton looked at his watch. It was half past two. “ Let him alone for an hour,” said his lordship, “ and see you that all that is

necessary is done, that I may leave at four;" and as he advanced to the servant he slipped a sovereign into his hand, which was received with many acknowledgments and much gratitude.

"You may rely upon it, my lord, that everything shall be ready in good time. Your lordship wishes for four post-horses, no doubt?"

"Oh, decidedly," replied Lord Swainton; "and if you wake my courier half an hour before starting, that will do."

"Sir Oscar," said his lordship, as he entered the library, "here I am, laden with all the treasures of Egypt." And producing the 1500 sovereigns, he laid them on the table.

"You are very obliging indeed," replied Sir Oscar; "I am sure your friend is under the greatest obligation to you; and as to myself, my lord, you may count upon me at all times, for I shall be truly happy to render you any service in my power."

"You have just an opportunity, then, of obliging me now," replied his lordship: "I am rather short of 'rhino' for the road, and a few purchases I have to make at Bath and Bristol, and I am afraid overdrawing my

bankers; perhaps you would allow me to be your debtor for a hundred sovereigns?"

"With very great pleasure, my lord," said Sir Oscar; "but are you sure that one hundred will be sufficient?"

"Oh yes, I think so," replied his lordship; "and I will pay them into the hands of your bankers' agents in London."

"Or, you can give me a cheque on your own bankers at once, dated at such time as may be agreeable to yourself."

"It would be better that no cheques passed between us," replied Lord Swainton. "We have hitherto done without them, and I do not see any occasion for resorting to them now."

"I think your lordship is quite right," said Sir Oscar; handing, with much grace and cheerfulness, the 100 sovereigns to his guest.

"And now, Sir Oscar, I must prepare for departure," said his lordship. "I wish to reach Bath as early as I can to-morrow, and the roads are heavy and hilly."

"I hope your lordship will not think of leaving to-night?" said Sir Oscar.

"You are too obliging," replied Lord Swainton. "My horses are ordered, and will be here at four."

A *déjeuner à la fourchette* was speedily served — Lord Swainton feasted with enthusiasm. He had 1300*l.* of his own, besides the use of the 500*l.* for which he had given a note-of-hand, on unstamped paper, to Mr. Walter. The world was before him. His play debts at Bath amounting to only 300 guineas, he would be able to wipe off the old, and begin new scores with the new season.

“I ought to have some letters of introduction on behalf of my friend to the Mayor and Corporation of Warnstable,” said his lordship; “perhaps you will have the goodness to send them to me at Bath?”

“They are all prepared,” replied Sir Oscar, “and here they are.” They were neatly written—drawn up with cold and quiet carefulness, contained all that was necessary, and were characteristic of the writer.

“Admirable!” cried his lordship, as he opened one after the other, and read the contents, pouring glass after glass of fine pale sherry into his capacious and wide mouth,—“beggars description! A bottle of this wine in the carriage would be no unpleasant companion.”

“ You are very good to say so,” replied Sir Oscar, who gave directions that it should be done, and that the horn cup tipped with silver should be put in the pocket.

“ Adieu, Sir Oscar,” said his lordship as he ascended the carriage steps, with his gloves and papers in one hand, and his money-box in the other. “ Any commands for Bath? — hope soon to introduce Sir Edward to you, and to meet you at Warnstable.”

“ I shall look forward to it with much pleasure,” said Sir Oscar, with rather more warmth than he was accustomed to display; and the carriage drove off whilst the Italian courier sprang to the rumble.

“ I am a lucky fellow, after all that’s said and done,” muttered his lordship in a tone somewhat louder than a whisper as the carriage drove out of the park gates of the Rookery; “ this business has been managed admirably. I have bought this seat for 2000*l.* and I sell it to Sir Edward for 3000*l.* Sir Oscar ought never to ask for that 100*l.* and Walter ought to be glad to take 300*l.* In that case, indeed, I should make 1300*l.* clear; and as Sir Edward will most certainly not allow me to re-

turn to him any part of the 300*l.* which he placed in my hands to meet various expenses, I shall be able to realise about 1600*l.* out of the 3300*l.*, besides other minor benefits in conducting the election through the agency of Montague. Of this 1600*l.* Montague must have 200*l.*—leaving 1400*l.* My Bath play debts will absorb 300*l.* — leaving 1100*l.* My travelling and other expenses, 100*l.* — leaving 1000*l.* One thousand pounds clear! Admirable!—Beggars description! And then, nothing can be more fair. I bought the seat cheaply because I managed well with Walter—bought Lord Bourtonbury out of the market—and conducted all the affair with a talent of which no one else is master! I told Sir Edward it would cost him 3000*l.* and a like sum for electioneering expenses. He made no objection. He shall be covered for 6000*l.*—nothing else concerns him. If I manage it on more eligible terms, so much the better for myself; but this is no affair of his. Warnstable against 6000*l.* That is the *real* question; and if I can manage it for 4000*l.* the difference is mine.”

These were Lord Swainton’s morals. “The

end justifies the means," was the motto of some portion of his life ; and so, provided Sir Edward was seated at Warnstable for 6000*l.*, it was Lord Swainton's opinion, that his friend had no right to inquire how that sum should be appropriated. Indeed, he went so far as to believe, that if he, Lord Swainton, could have obtained the seat for 600*l.* instead of 6000*l.*, the difference would belong to him, inasmuch as he had fixed on the latter sum with Sir Edward. His mode of reasoning, with respect to Mr. Walter and Sir Oscar Morbleu, was equally ingenious and peculiar. " If Mr. Walter had made the arrangements for Lord Bourtonbury," said Lord Swainton to himself, " his lordship would only have given him 300*l.* This Walter admitted : and for this 300*l.* he must have incurred much trouble and anxiety. Whereas, I shall give him 300*l.* for doing — nothing. It's very true that I gave him a note for 500*l.* — but then that was done in a moment of excitement ; — and if I pay him 300*l.* when his note becomes due at Long's, he ought to be delighted ! As to Sir Oscar, he will be the most ungracious, ungrateful, ungenerous cur living, if he ask for the repayment of the

100%. I just obtained from him in the shape of an advance;" and so taking a piece of paper from his breast pocket, and his silver pencil-case, he wrote as follows:—

Received.	£	Paid.	£
Sir Edward .	3000	Sir Oscar . . .	1500
For Expenses .	300	Walter . . .	500
From Morbleu .	100	Expenses . . .	100
Deduct from Walter	200	Montague must have	200
	—	Further Expenses, say	100
	3600		—
	2400		£ 2400
	—		
Balance .	1200		
Deduct Play Debts } at Bath . }	300		
	—		
Clear Balance left	£ 900		
	—		

"Beggars description! Beggars description!" exclaimed his lordship, several times, as he reviewed these figures and facts, and passed all the events before his mind in glorious and rapid succession. "I'm saved this time at any rate. A little luck at Bath, will set me on my legs."

After a long night, and a dismally cold ride, only enlivened by a good dinner on the road,

and by oft administered glasses of the fine pale sherry of Sir Oscar, which had been put in the carriage, Lord Swainton arrived at Bath.

“ I will give the York a benefit this time,” said his lordship, “ and pay my small score of 20*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* I have owed the last two years. These sort of paying arrangements, now and then, are admirable modes of extending credit hereafter. I shall quite astonish the weak mind of the landlord. Beggars description ! ”

His lordship drove up to the York. The waiters with their master were all at the door. The Italian courier descended. The former had expected to see some face or family calculated to excite hope and pleasure ; but they turned away half annoyed and but scarcely civil, when “ Old Beggars Description ” made his appearance. Lord Swainton perceived this with sorrow, but such sorrows were not novel to him, and he despatched them as quickly as possible.

“ Waiter — waiter ” — cried his lordship, as he entered the coffee-room, “ just ask your master to change this 100*l.* note for me, I have not enough left to pay the postillions — and there’s a small affair I owe him, of 20*l.* that

he may as well deduct, and give me the balance. It entirely slipped my memory."

"Your lordship is very good," said the waiter, who knew that his master had long since put this down as a bad debt; and he hastened out of the room with great rapidity.

It was nearly ten minutes before he returned with many bows, and hosts of thanks from the landlord, who soon afterwards made *his* appearance, and asked if his lordship purposed remaining the night at the hotel, or whether he would proceed to London.

"I shall remain some days," said his lordship; and then made many inquiries as to the last arrivals at Bath.

"Lord Bourtonbury's son has been staying here some days," said the landlord, "but has left for Warnstable this morning."

"For Warnstable!" said his lordship, with great quickness and some agitation. "For Warnstable, did you say? Has his agent, Mr. Walter, gone with him?"

"He has not, my lord. Mr. Walter has gone to London or to Grantham, I forget which."

This was a piece of intelligence he could not comprehend. Had Lord Bourtonbury's son

resolved to canvass the borough of Warnstable before Sir Edward Clapperton ; and, as he was defeated in his arrangements with Sir Oscar, to seek to obtain the seat without making any other appeal but to the electors? Was Mr. Walter a party to such plans? What was to be done? Surely Sir Oscar could not be selling his interest twice over, and thus attempting to deceive all parties. This was impossible to be believed, and yet there was no accounting for this wholly unexpected movement.

“ Did his lordship’s son and Mr. Walter appear on good terms ? ” asked Lord Swainton.

“ Why, I think quite the reverse, my lord. The last word I heard Mr. Walter say was, ‘ Mind, I protest against your going ; ’ to which his lordship’s son replied, ‘ Who cares for your protest, Mr. Walter ! ’ ”

“ Ah, indeed ! indeed ! ” replied his lordship, “ some mad prank of the young man, I suppose. He’s quite a lad, full of fun and folly ; beggars description ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

Lord Swainton took an early dinner, went to the theatre, rooms, and tables, and lost 50*l.* in half an hour.

“ I am sorry to inform your lordship,” said

the landlord of the York, as Lord Swainton returned to his hotel a little after midnight, “that a fellow here, named Dickins, who has some pretended claim on your lordship, has had the impertinence to obtain an execution against your lordship’s carriage for 17*l.* and a few odd shillings. The execution was issued a few days since against some books of your lordship’s, deposited long ago, by your lordship, with Mr. Smith, in Bond Street Buildings; but Mr. Smith claimed more than the value of the books for rent and so forth; and, as the officer saw your lordship stepping out of your carriage this afternoon, he asked your Italian courier if this was your lordship’s carriage?”

“Well, and what did the fellow answer?” asked Lord Swainton.

“He said, certainly, it was the carriage of your lordship.”

“Ass! fool! beast! foreign scoundrel! liar! that he is!” exclaimed Lord Swainton, in a thundering passion. “It is not my carriage, never was, and never will be. But what then?”

“Why, my lord, the carriage has been seized, and cannot go out of my yard until

either the pretended debt be paid, or until it be decided that the carriage is not your lordship's."

"What is best to be done?" asked his lordship.

"Either employ an attorney to-morrow morning," replied the landlord, "and bring an action against the sheriff in the name of the proprietor of the carriage for illegal seizure, or else pay the debt and costs."

"The carriage is not mine," said his lordship; "but if the scoundrel, who has made the seizure, will take 10*l.* and give a receipt in full of all demands, I will give him that amount on his withdrawing the seizure."

"I will see about it in the morning," replied the landlord, who made his bow and withdrew.

"An unlucky afternoon, this," thought Lord Swainton. "Twenty pounds gone to that fellow, for the old bill I owed at this hotel; now at least ten more for this Fi-fa affair; and young Bourtonbury on his road to Warnstable! What's best to be done? First of all, not to plague myself any more about the 20*l.*; second, to get rid of this carriage business,

and of the carriage too, as quickly as possible, or it will be seized again by some other rascally creditor ; and thirdly, set off to Warnstable, and watch all the movements of this young scamp of a fellow, who has doubtless gone there of his own accord, to see how the land lies, and, perhaps, to make a disclosure of Sir Oscar's intentions."

"Let the carriage and two pair of horses be at the door at nine precisely to-morrow morning," said his lordship to his courier, who came for instructions for the next day. The landlord of the York had kept the whole affair of the seizure a secret, so that the Italian courier had no idea of what had transpired.

Lord Swainton was no idler. Though it was nearly one in the morning, and he had travelled the whole of the previous cold night from the Rookery to Bath, he sat down and wrote letters. He wrote to Sir Felix Montague, to Scrope, to his daughters, who were dispersed over the country, and to Sir Edward, as well as to Sir Oscar Morbleu. The letter to Sir Edward was as follows:—

“ MY DEAR SIR EDWARD,

“ Here I am at Bath, with all the papers in regular order, and ready for our parliamentary campaign. On my arrival here, however, I have learned something which has annoyed me, and which compels me, though cold, wearied, and worn out, to return to Warnstable. A young man, the son of Lord Bourtonbury, has gone down thither to canvass the electors, contrary to the will of his father and to the advice of his agent. As he only left twelve hours since, I shall be on the spot before him ; and, should it become necessary, am *en mesure* to take, in your behalf, through some respectable borough agent there, all the measures which may be desirable. Do not leave Clapham Hall, even for an hour, without leaving word where you may be found, unless indeed you prefer proceeding at once to Bath and waiting for me at Milsom Street. In that event, you will be prepared with gold to meet all the expenses of the election. Write me by return of post at the post office, Warnstable, under the feigned name of William Gurney, Esq., as I shall keep myself perfectly incog. unless

the young boy who has gone thither should have really commenced a canvass, and, in that event, I shall crush his hopes at once, with my name, my purse, and my energy. Your seat is safe. Place me, where I should be, at the feet of the ladies, and believe me that I am, as ever,

“Yours faithfully,

“SWAINTON.”

The next morning, the affair of the carriage could not be settled without the payment of twelve pounds, but for which sum the Fi-fa was discharged, and his lordship, and his courier returned by the same road on which they had travelled the previous day, and arrived on the following at Warnstable.

As the carriage drove up to the door of the best inn in the borough, Lord Swainton perceived a young man, whom he recognised as Lord Bourtonbury's eldest son, in earnest conversation with the landlord.

“The Whigs have no chances here,” said the landlord, as he turned off from the young Whigling to address himself to the new comer.

“You have a comfortable bed-room and

good sitting-room to spare, no doubt?" said his lordship to the landlord.

"I have both at your service," replied the delighted host, who was embarrassed to know how it was that carriages-and-four should be arriving so rapidly at Warnstable.

His lordship directed his courier not to give his name, but to state that he was a Mr. Gurney, a gentleman of large fortune in the north of England; and then walked about the borough. He examined all the public and private buildings, talked with the poorer and middling classes, found no one prepared for a new election, but every one believing that ere long there would be a general election all over the country. With many the wish was father to the thought, but some of the more intelligent people apprehended that affairs in France might terminate badly.

"And who are your present members?" asked Lord Swainton of the landlord as he brought in the ox-tail soup in a silver tureen, with a damask napkin under his arm.

"Sir Oscar Morbleu is our principal member," replied the landlord; "and Mr. Paterson is the other."

“Is Mr. Patterson the Whig?” asked his lordship.

“He is so,” answered the landlord, “but he will never be elected again; and yet there is a young gentleman here, who is the son of a Whig lord whose name shall be nameless—”

“Oh, I know who he is,” interrupted his lordship; “the son of Lord Bourtonbury.”

“Well he will have it, that another Whig candidate, in the event of a general election, would be successful.”

“But there is no chance of a general election for the present at any rate,” replied Lord Swainton.

“No, I think not,” said the landlord; “and I have said as much to the young gentleman you saw me talking to. But he has got hold of some cock-and-a-bull story of Sir Oscar being about to resign. I told him he knew very little, I thought, of our provincial news, for that certainly if Sir Oscar had any such intentions he would have made them known to me before any man in the borough.”

“And what has Lord Bourtonbury’s son to do here, do you suppose?”

“Oh, I have no idea,” replied the landlord;

“ I presume he is going on. He travels alone, and without a servant, and told me just now that Warnstable was a very dull place, and that he should leave in the morning.”

“ Ah, indeed !” remarked Lord Swainton. “ Did he say whither he was going ?”

“ No, he did not ; but he asked me how far it was to Exeter.”

“ I should like to know which road he takes,” said his lordship, merely as a matter of idle curiosity. “ It is an odd season of the year to be travelling about for pleasure.”

“ It is rather so, indeed,” replied the landlord, and then left the room.

When he returned with the fish his lordship asked “ if Sir Oscar Morbleu had much influence in the borough.”

“ Very much indeed,” replied his tenant, for such was the landlord of the inn ; “ and I flatter myself that I have some small influence too ; but I would rather lose my life than vote for a Whig or any of their creatures.”

“ You are right,” said his lordship, “ though you run some risk of losing your travellers if you always give your opinion so freely.”

“ I have the honour to know to whom I am

addressing myself," said the landlord. "Your lordship does not remember me."

"Indeed I do not," said his lordship, "and I think you are mistaken in your man."

"I think not, Lord Swainton," retorted the landlord. "Does your lordship remember Sam Pocock, who lived with your mother-in-law as coachman ten years, and who left her service on account of ill health to return to his native place?"

"To be sure I do," said his lordship; "and are you Sam?"

"I am, indeed," replied the landlord; "I came down here—my father died and left me 200*l.*—I was patronized by the clergy, Tory nobility, and gentry, and especially by Sir Oscar, who lent me 300*l.* on the strength of my family's good character; and twenty-two years ago, next March, I became the tenant of this inn. I have been here ever since—never had a day's illness—have long since paid off my loans and debts, and have now a few thousands in the Consols, and some property in this town; all of which is at the service of the Tory cause, which is as dear to me as my own life. Church and King for ever is

my motto ; and no Whigs or Whiglins have any chances with me."

"That 's capital," said his lordship ; "as good as this sherry of yours ; of which I hope you will do me the pleasure, Pocock, to take a glass, and wish 'success to the Tory cause in Warnstable.'"

"With all my heart, my lord," said the landlord ; and as his lordship insisted on his taking a seat, he recounted to him all the minute details of his private fortunes.

"And now I will tell *you* a secret, Pocock," said his lordship. "You are an honest man, a true Tory, an old servant in our family, and can be relied on,—read those papers ;" pulling out of his pocket one after the other those prepared at Sir Oscar Morbleu's.

The landlord read them over and over again. "You astonish me, my lord," said the landlord ; "but as that is the case you may command my services in any way you think fit, since of course your candidate is a Tory."

"To the backbone," said his lordship.

"All right," replied the landlord ; "but his name?"

"Sir Edward Clapperton,—a man of good

family, excellent connexions, first-rate fortune, fine generous fellow, and all that sort of thing."

"Very good, very good," said the landlord; and then his lordship explained to him the line of conduct he proposed to adopt, viz., that of having the writ moved for on the same day as Sir Oscar's resignation and Sir Edward's address should be circulated at Warnstable.

"Will you be his agent?" asked his lordship.

"Not myself, but my son," replied the landlord; "and if 1500*l.* be judiciously spent, the election this time is sure."

Discouraged by his visit to Warnstable Lord Bourtonbury's son set off early the next morning to Exeter to visit some relatives, and Lord Swainton resolved on remaining a day or two until he should hear from Sir Edward, in order to complete the arrangements he had partially made. With those arrangements he was well pleased, but he was yet more convinced than ever; firstly, that Sir Edward's seat was sure; and secondly, that he, Lord Swainton, might save at least another thousand pounds for himself out of the election expenses. Glorious prospect! vast consolation!

CHAPTER VIII.

————— O speak, if voice thou hast !
Tell me what sacrifice can soothe your spirits ?
SHAKSPEARE.

THE Clappertons had made all their visits of ceremony — returned the few fashionable calls of the neighbouring gentry, arranged their affairs of *ménage*, locked up all their valuables, deposited their papers and documents in the great chest at the bankers', and put Clapham Hall on board wages, previously to their departure for Bath, when Sir Edward received by post, at eleven in the morning, the letter from Lord Swainton, which announced that the son of the old Whig, Lord Bourtonbury, had set off for Warnstable. The first impression produced by this letter was rather a painful one. Sir Edward thought of his 3000*l.*, which though not ruinous, was still a very consider-

able sum ; and although he had made up his mind to expend 6000*l.* rather than not obtain his seat, he did hope there would be no opposition to his return, and in that case that a small portion only of the second 3000*l.* would be required. He had looked on 6000*l.* as the maximum, and about 4000*l.* as the minimum. In fact, he was a novice in electioneering matters, and very little acquainted with the worthy and *independent* burgesses of Warnstable. He had a sort of confused idea that the 3000*l.* he had already transmitted would find its way partly into Sir Oscar's, and partly into the electors' pockets ; how or in what way he knew not ; and that the rest of the expenses he would have to discharge would be only for taverns, —treating,—an election ball, or something or other in the form of a banquet to his constituents, after the whole was over, unless, indeed, some Whig rival should appear on the field, and then he was fully prepared to incur expenses to the full extent of the extra 3000*l.* Now, in justice to Lord Swainton, it must be admitted that these inaccurate notions of Sir Edward were not the result either of concealment, fraud, or mis-statement on the part of

the former; but were simply the result of Sir Edward's real ignorance of election matters, and an unwillingness on his part to make inquiries of his lordship, lest on the one hand his ignorance should be thus betrayed, and on the other his lordship should think him distrustful of his vast powers of arrangement, or of his most honourable and most friendly intentions. But now that the 3000*l.* were paid, and yet Lord Bourtonbury's son had started for Warnstable, thereby proving that the secret of Sir Oscar's intentions to resign had not been kept, Sir Edward began to perceive that whether he succeeded or not, he would probably have to lose his 6000*l.*, and that it was no longer of any use to conceal from himself that even the whole of that sum would be required.

Sir Edward talked over these matters confidentially with his sisters, who reminded him that a debt, long since due, from Sir Morgan O'Flimwell, about the payment of which the family had entertained serious doubts for several years, had been lately received from India, amounting to 5000*l.* so that in fact even should the whole of the 6000*l.* be expended on the contested elec-

tion, it would only be 1000*l.* in addition to what they had long looked on as a bad debt. This way of regarding the matter was exceedingly consolatory to Sir Edward, especially as Lord Swainton had re-assured him, even in his last letter, that his election was quite sure.

Notwithstanding, however, these cheering prospects, it was resolved in solemn conclave by Sir Edward and the Miss Clappertons, that the former should write a letter to Lord Swainton, full of expressions of gratitude and confidence: but at the same time hinting that it would afford him great pleasure to learn that there would be no contest, as, in that case, the additional expenses would probably not amount to more than 1000*l.* instead of 3000*l.*

After making some half-dozen draughts of letters, and writing no fewer than three copies, to meet the still further prudential suggestions of the eldest Miss Clapperton, the following was the document agreed upon, which was then duly despatched to Warnstable, directed, as desired, to William Gurney, Esq. Post Office.

“MY VERY DEAR LORD,

“How can I thank you sufficiently for all

your kindness? I have racked my brain in vain for suitable expressions. My sisters have done the same ; but the result is to avow our perfect consciousness that there are not words in our language sufficiently forcible to express all our gratitude and admiration. My sisters insist upon my saying '*nous sommes vraiment accablés.*' They think this is the strongest phrase they can aid me in composing ; and yet, still we all feel its weakness.

“ That you should have returned so instantaneously to Warnstable, has also filled us with surprise and delight. I am of course unable to understand the position of parties in the borough in question, and know nothing of the chances of a Whig opponent, though I cannot help hoping that no opposition will take place, and that then the second 3000*l.* will not be required, or, at least, but a small portion of it. If an opposition should occur, I shall of course be prepared at Bath, as your lordship suggests, with 3000 more sovereigns ; but we will still hope that your lordship's zeal, talents, energies, and promptitude, may render that expenditure unnecessary. We shall leave to-morrow morning for Bath, so that my ad-

dress will be Milsom Street, where I hope indeed soon to receive you in person, and where my sisters anticipate much delight from your very agreeable society and conversation.

“Renewing my assurances of unbounded esteem and gratitude, I am, my dear lord,

“Your obliged and faithful,

“E. CLAPPERTON.”

As Sir Edward resolved on having his horses conducted down to Bath by his grooms, he and his sisters travelled post. In the first carriage, which was the old family dark yellow coach were Sir Edward, the two Miss Clappertons, and Miss Lucy Dawson, the very pretty daughter of Colonel Dawson. The Colonel, who had been wounded at Waterloo, with his family, belonged to both societies at Clapham; they visited the citizens and the squires, and were equally beloved by both. Miss Lucy Dawson was a fine-spirited girl, full of life, energy, warmth of character, and feeling. She had received an admirable education, but, unfortunately for herself, had but a very small fortune. She played well, danced well, walked well, talked well, looked

well, felt well, and thought well, and was only twenty-one. In a drawing-room she was a picture. She was always admired. Every one who knew her not, immediately inquired of his neighbour "who was that beautiful creature?" and every one "was sorry to hear that she had nothing." Lucy was fully aware of her position, but it produced no unpleasing effect upon her character. She was neither jealous of others who were wealthy, nor studious to make herself agreeable because she was poor. She never affected indifference to men's society, nor an aversion to marriage, which she did not feel. The motto of her heart was, "*mon heure viendra.*" She was of a lively and amiable disposition. The Miss Clappertons were much attached to her, Sir Edward thought her a very agreeable person, "but she was not the style of beauty he admired;" and though he danced with her in preference to any other of the belles of Clapham, he never felt that his heart had prompted this selection. Lucy's health always suffered, during winter, for her chest was rather delicate, and cold weather severely affected her. The Miss Clappertons had prevailed on Colonel

and Mrs. Dawson to allow their daughter to accompany them to Bath, as their guest during their winter sojourn, and the Colonel felt the less hesitation in acceding to their request, as the Miss Clappertons were known to be remarkably steady girls, and as there was an impression at Clapham that Sir Edward was engaged to a rich heiress ; though who she was, or where she resided, no one could tell. Had not this opinion been generally entertained, and had not the Miss Clappertons been highly esteemed for their prudence, the Colonel was the last man in the world to have allowed any protracted visit, on the part of his daughter, to a family, the head of which was a young and wealthy bachelor.

With light and happy hearts the party ascended the carriage steps to proceed to Bath, and in the new green post chariot, from Adams's, were the two ladies'-maids, with the favourite Italian greyhound of their younger mistress. There were the adequate number of men-servants outside each carriage, and the whole procession had the gay appearance of a wedding. Sir Edward was in excellent spirits — all the guide-books imaginable were

on the seats or in the pockets of the carriage ; Theodore Hook's " Sayings and Doings," were likewise there, to chase away *ennui*, should such a monster dare to intrude even for a second. A travelling pocket chess-board, two small *solitaires*, and a new puzzle, formed also part of the inside baggage of this joyous company, as with health, wealth, and good-humour, they proceeded on their road.

" Come, keep up your courage," said Sir Edward to Miss Lucy, when they crossed the once famous heath of HOUNSLOW ; " this was the scene of the exploits of Ned Halloran ; and who can say we may not meet such another ?"

" Ned Halloran," replied Miss Lucy, " why, who was Ned Halloran ?"

" Ask my sisters," said Sir Edward ; " his story was a favourite of our poor dear father."

" Oh ! pray tell it me then," exclaimed the pretty *voyageuse* ; and Miss Clapperton the elder became the spokeswoman.

" Well, Ned Halloran, my dear, was a highwayman, and one well-known for infesting this heath ; a great *collector*, as he was styled, a perfect Macheath, surrounded by the worst

of female society, to whose vices and extravagance he contributed all his hard earnings, until he was ultimately betrayed by a favourite *Dulcinea del Toboso*, and received sentence of death, which punishment was commuted to transportation for life. Ned Halloran, possessed principles that would have reflected credit on a better cause, and acted up to the strictest rule of honour in every private transaction of his life; he could not, however, be convinced that he had been guilty of a crime, in taking from those persons who possessed property, in order to relieve himself, who had none. Such was the character of this robber. Well, you know Maria Catherwood, my dear?"

"Yes," replied Lucy, "I met her once at your house, and thought her the most lovely creature I ever saw."

"Indeed, she is very pretty," said Sir Edward.

"Well, then," continued Miss Clapperton, "upon one of Ned Halloran's collecting days, on this very heath we are now crossing, he stopped Maria's maternal great uncle, a goldsmith and refiner, a man of considerable pro-

perty and importance in the City of London. Ned Halloran took from him, without any resistance on his part, his cash, gold watch, chain, and seals, and also his silver knee and shoe-buckles, and then very politely wished the goldsmith a good morning. The highwayman, thinking all was right and safe, after a short circuitous route on the heath, put up his horse at an inn to take refreshment. His repast being ended, just as he was ready to mount his horse, the goldsmith rode into the yard, but did not recognize him. Halloran left the inn without the slightest agitation, and in the course of a few days offered the above stolen articles for sale at the goldsmith's own counter. The latter looked up at Halloran, without betraying any appearance of his recollecting the man who had robbed him on Hounslow Heath; 'These are my goods,' said he. 'Who made them yours?' asked Halloran. 'The same person that made them yours,' replied the refiner. 'Explain,' exclaimed Halloran. 'Yourself, then,' retorted the goldsmith. 'How is that?' asked Halloran, with imperturbable assurance. 'Did you not make them yours by robbing me of them on

Hounslow Heath ? and now have you not made them mine by bringing them back to me ?” Halloran took to his heels, and the goldsmith never saw him again.”

“ Oh ! that’s very amusing,” said Lucy. “ Do you know any more tales of the highwayman ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Charlotte ; “ on another occasion, he robbed of a valuable lot of jewellery a person, who was what the thieves term a *fence*, that is, a receiver of stolen goods ; and afterwards, to his astonishment, found that he was offering them for sale to the very man he had robbed. But the receiver of stolen goods, with the utmost coolness and in a business-like manner, paid him the worth of them, and Halloran retired from the shop in safety. This is easily accounted for ; as the jeweller was a refiner, and melted down goods as soon as they were brought to him by thieves. Ned must have been directed to his shop by some of his own fraternity ; and therefore the refiner pocketed the affront, fearing that, if any inquiries had been made into the subject, his own iniquitous practices would be discovered. It is a positive fact that this jeweller and re-

finer, in a few years after this transaction, put a period to his existence to avoid the disgrace of a public trial for forging the Goldsmith's Company's mark, to pass the articles he sold as gold."

"Oh! that is an amusing story," said Lucy.

"Well," said Sir Edward, "here we are at Cranford Bridge, and yonder is Cranford Park, once the residence of the famous Colonel Berkeley, now Lord Seagrave."

"He deserves to be a lord," said Lucy; "for his conduct to his brother the present Earl of Berkeley was truly noble."

"Road to Bushy," exclaimed the younger Miss Clapperton, looking towards a sign-post. "Who was it lived at Bushy? I quite forget."

"Why, Mrs. Jordan, to be sure," said Lucy.

'In Cora sweetly did she play her part.

No word, no action was with her at strife;
Her feelings flow'd spontaneous from the heart,
The anxious mother and the tender wife.'

"She was before our time," said Sir Edward; "but my father used to talk of her talents in the part of 'Peggy,' as well as in that of 'Pickle.'

‘ Her virtues many, seek not her faults to view ;
Whate’er they were, they ’re buried in her bier.
This humble tribute to her merit’s due,
And mem’ry still will give her name—a tear.’ ”

“ Oh ! we are getting quite poetic,” exclaimed the younger Miss Clapperton.

“ And I quite hungry,” said Sir Edward ; and soon afterwards they all stopped at Salt Hill.

“ The best luncheon you can put upon the table,” said Sir Edward, as the landlord smiled with satisfaction and complacency.

“ You shall have the best the house can afford, my lord.”

“ No, not ‘ my lord’ yet,” said Sir Edward ; “ but simply Sir Edward Clapperton.”

“ I beg your pardon,” replied the landlord. “ I mistook you, Sir Edward, for the young Duke of Dunster, whom I have been expecting some days past on his way to Bath, and who generally honours me by spending the night here. We have admirable beds, Sir Edward ; all of down. Beautiful ride to Eton and Windsor. Would you like to choose your bed-rooms, ladies ? ”

“ Oh ! no,” said Sir Edward, “ we must

reach Bath to-night. My Lord Swainton will, perhaps, be expecting me; and it is not agreeable, at this season of the year, to sleep at hotels, even though as well aired and ventilated as yours."

As the landlord was disappointed in one part of his expectations, he resolved to obey to the letter Sir Edward's orders respecting the luncheon; and soup, fillets of sole and salmon, hot and cold game, pastry, and every imaginable luxury, made the table groan and the ladies smile.

The landlord praised his champagne and hermitage; his good things were then all tasted, and all approved.

After Sir Edward had paid the bill, the amount of which we will not state, the party quitted Salt Hill with some regret, for civility and warmth, an admirable larder and the best imaginable wines, are by no means to be despised in wintry weather, on the road even to—Bath.

After luncheon, came gaming, but gaming on a very small scale; chess for a shilling, and solitaire for sixpence. Lucy won all. She

checkmated Sir Edward, and took all the ivory pegs off the solitaire board but one.

As the day grew dusk and the sky grey, they reached Hungerford.

“I know not precisely its position,” said Sir Edward, “but in this very neighbourhood Ramsbury Manor-house is situated, the mansion of Sir Francis Burdett, whose whole life has been devoted to one favourite scheme, “Reform of parliament.”

“Sir Francis Burdett!” cried Miss Claperton; “why, dear Edward, is he not a radical?”

“Upon my word, I know not,” replied Sir Edward; “but, at least, he always votes with them on that one question of reform. There are some who think that, if once he could obtain the object he contends for, there would not be a stauncher conservative in the empire. One thing is certain, he is one of the best scholars in the country, and is a man of large fortune and ancient family.”

“And yet a radical?” asked Lucy, who did not profess, however, to be very great in politics.

“That would seem impossible,” said Miss Clapperton. “A radical is, I believe, one who, having nothing, wishes to subvert everything, that he may profit by a scramble. Sir Francis Burdett can have no wish for that state of things. He would be a loser, and not a gainer, by the establishment of such principles.”

“You are quite right,” remarked Sir Edward. “Sir Francis Burdett may have some peculiar notions as to representation, and some theoretical notions as to reform, but he is no leveller.”

“Would you like to take a glass of Hungerford beer, sir?” asked the waiter at the inn, whilst horses were changing.

“By all means; its fame is extensive, and, though I am no lover of malt liquor, yet I like to encourage the staple trade of the place.”

The foaming tankard was handed round. One said “the beer was delicious,” another pronounced it to be “exquisite,” a third “quite as good as champagne,” and Sir Edward himself summed up all by saying, that

even Sir Charles Stilton never brewed better at Still Hill.

“It is moonlight,” said Sir Edward, “and the night is clear ; we are remarkably fortunate.”

“Oh, I have just seen a ghost !” exclaimed Miss Lucy, as they arrived at Cherrill ; “I am sure it was a ghost. It resembled a horse, an immense white horse riding in the sky. I never beheld anything so extraordinary in my life before. It appeared to be travelling in the sky in the same direction as we are going.”

“Let me see this ghost, too,” said Sir Edward, as he let down the window, and reached his head out as far as he could without disturbing the ladies.

“Well, true enough, it is a ghost, or something like it,” replied Sir Edward ; and, calling to the coachman, he directed him to order the postboys “to pull up,” that they might examine the mystery.

“What’s that figure ?” asked Sir Edward of the post lads.

“Oh, it’s only the white horse cut out on

the hill side," replied one of the amused drivers; and the anxieties of the party were relieved.

"How annoying!" said Lucy. "I wish it had been a ghost. I am so fond of ghosts, that is, of ghost stories. Do you know a good ghost story, Sir Edward?"

"I think I do," he replied.

"Oh! pray tell it, then; it will be so delightful to hear a good ghost story whilst travelling."

"But it is quite true," said Sir Edward.

"So much the better," replied Lucy, who implored him to begin at once.

Sir Edward was too obliging to be implored in vain, and he related the following facts.

"Once upon a time, and that time was not many years since, there lived in a village in the north of England, where the Wesleyans are abundant and Methodism is prosperous, an old lady and gentleman of that denomination, who were distinguished for their piety and worth. In the district in which they resided they were, as far as worldly circumstances were concerned, the most respectable of the body, and they were in the habit of

receiving at their pretty cottage the preachers, to spend the Saturday night, the whole of Sunday, giving them an early breakfast, and bidding them God speed, as they returned over the hills to head-quarters on Monday. The travelling preachers in the circuit used to take it by turns to visit this village, and there was no other house so much approved. The old lady and gentleman had a faithful servant, a female named Mary Cookson, a Wesleyan, and she was highly respected in their society for her faith and good works. Mr. West, one of the travelling preachers, on arriving in his turn at the residence of the old gentleman and lady, found to his surprise all the inner shutters shut, or the blinds drawn down, and knocked at the door with some anxiety.

“ Mary opened it. She looked dejected but not overwhelmed, cast down but not in despair.

“ ‘ I fear something is the matter ? ’ said Mr. West.

“ ‘ Yes, sir,’ replied Mary. ‘ My poor, dear master and mistress are both dead ; one died within an hour of the other, — but your

room is all ready, sir, your supper all prepared ; — they left word on what text they wished you to preach to-morrow evening to the congregation, and they gave orders that they should be buried at the parish church next Tuesday.’

“ ‘ I am deeply grieved,’ replied Mr. West ; and he wept like a child.

“ ‘ Oh, they have been to see me,’ said Mary, ‘ several times ; they come every day, they are very good to me ; they told me they loved me quite as much now as ever they did, and they bade me make myself happy for that I was well provided for. I have got a friend of mine to write to the last address of their terribly wicked son-in-law, who I expect will come down to hunt after the will. I do not know where it is, but my poor master and mistress have hidden it somewhere, and confided the secret of its hiding-place to an old gentleman, a friend of theirs who died of an apoplectic fit the very night following the morning when they died ; so that no one now knows where the will is. Their poor daughter died broken-hearted long since ; but left

three charming children, all of whom are provided for by the will.'

" 'I do not think there can be any difficulty about the will, Mary,' replied Mr. West; 'for doubtless, you know the name of the lawyer who prepared it, and therefore the draught of it would be found amongst his papers.'

" 'That also is very unfortunate,' said Mary; 'I know who it was that prepared the will, but about a year ago his house and office were burnt down, and with it the copy of the will he had, and some important deeds likewise of my master and mistress. I have been praying very much about this matter,' added Mary; 'and I feel little doubt that some light will be thrown upon it. I have heard a great deal of knocking in and about the room in which you are going to sleep, sir; and I have looked in every direction, but I am rather hard of hearing, and to-day the knocking has ceased. I wish it may begin again whilst you are here, sir, perhaps you would then be able to find all out.'

" Mr. West, though a most excellent man, found it rather difficult to say amen to this

wish of poor Mary, but still he did say, ‘that though he had no desire to see a ghost, he by no means wholly disbelieved in them, and was quite willing to leave himself in the hands of Providence.’

“After partaking of his supper, and gazing on the icy cold faces of his beloved but departed friends, Mr. West took leave of Mary and retired to his room. He only asked for a candle, that he might not be without a light in case of any extraordinary visit, and after recommending both body and soul to the protection of the Divine Being, he went to sleep. No noise disturbed him. He slept well all night, and in the morning he could not help thinking, though he did not say as much to poor Mary, that the noises she had spoken of were imaginary.

“That day, Sunday, he preached as his departed friends had desired Mary to request he would do, viz. in the morning from the text on which he had resolved to preach before he arrived; but in the evening from that which they had selected as the basis of a funeral sermon for themselves. The congregation in the evening was greater than ever before

known, so much were the old gentleman and lady respected; and many members of the National Church paid this tribute of respect to their memory.

“‘Well Mary,’ said Mr. West after the evening’s service, ‘have you any further clue to the will? as—’

“‘Oh yes,’ she replied; ‘master and mistress came to see me again, sir, this afternoon, when you were out visiting your friends. I did not like to say anything to you about it this evening before you had preached, sir, for fear of its disturbing your mind; but both master and mistress pointed to the cupboard in your room.’

“Nothing daunted, good Mr. West asked for a candle, and together they examined, looked, scrutinised closely, and knocked the boards and the wainscoting; but all to no avail. There was nothing to indicate the smallest difference between one part of the cupboard and another, and Mr. West again thought that poor Mary was either highly nervous, or given to dreaming.

“‘I have had a letter, too, this afternoon from the terrible son-in-law,’ said poor Mary;

‘and he tells me that he cannot come down to the funeral of the old people, because he is ill in bed, but that the moment he can undertake the journey he shall come down and take possession of the property ; and directs me to remain in the house till he comes. I did not want his orders upon this point,’ added Mary ; ‘for my master and mistress made signs to me this very afternoon at this table, whilst they stood there,’ pointing to the exact spot, ‘and I sat here as I do now, not to forsake the house’

“ ‘ Did they speak to you then ? ’ asked Mr. West.

“ ‘ No, sir, they did not say a word ; but, God bless them ! and you sir, too, I have lived so long with them, and knew so well all they thought and felt without their saying a word, that it was quite natural for me to understand what they wanted and intended.’

“ Mr. West again supped ; again had a candle ; again went to bed, and again slept all night without being disturbed by any noise whatever. He had no longer any doubt that Mary was deceived by fears or by nervous sensations.

“ ‘ When do you come again to this place,

sir ? ' asked Mary, as Mr. West was taking his Monday morning's breakfast, previously to his departure.

" ' Why, our next quarterly plan is not published yet, Mary,' replied Mr. West ; ' but our superintendent fixed with me that I should come the sabbath after next.'

" ' Then I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you any more ?' said Mary.

" ' Why, I thought you told me yesterday, you had determined to remain in the house ?' replied Mr. West.

" ' Yes, but I shall be gone to heaven before a fortnight,' replied poor Mary. ' I know this now ; and I hope you will be good enough to say for me to the congregation, that God has been a faithful God to me all my life long, and that the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness and peace.'

" ' Whenever you do die, I will certainly say as much, Mary,' he said ; ' that is, if I am in this part of the country then ; but I hope that day is far removed. It is not given to us, you know, to know the times and the seasons when God will call us. These things are known only to him, who wisely keeps such secrets from us.'

“ ‘Very true, very true, sir, as a general rule,’ replied Mary ; ‘but you know, sir, God can do as he will amongst the hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth ; and, therefore, there is no rule without some exception.’

“ ‘Cheer up, Mary, cheer up ; you are dull, lonely, melancholy. You had better have some one to come and keep you company ; you get nervous and timid.’

“ ‘Oh dear, no ! Mr. West,’ replied Mary with quite unusual energy : ‘you are very much mistaken indeed, sir, if you think me either dull, lonely, melancholy, nervous, or timid. I have lived too long with my poor dear master and mistress, and loved them too dearly, to be frightened at them. But if you do not come before the Sunday after next, you will see me no more. I thank you for all your kindness to me, and to my master and mistress, sir, whilst living ; and may we all meet in eternal glory !’

“ ‘Thank you, Mary,’ said Mr. West ; ‘thank you, my dear friend ! That is the best wish you can give me ; but do not indulge in low spirits. Adieu !’ And he departed for his home.

“The next Tuesday, the mortal remains of the good old folks were committed to the grave. All the village were present, and Mary was the chief mourner.

“‘It is hardly worth while to cover over the coffins,’ said Mary to the clergyman, after the funeral was over, ‘it will be my turn next; for when master read to me his will, he said it was his wish, as also that of his wife, that, if practicable, I should be buried with them.’

“‘Do not despair,’ replied the clergyman, ‘you may have many years before you. The term of our lives is in the hands of God. Come and see me. I wish you belonged to our Church entirely: but I know you love it, nevertheless.’

“‘Indeed I do, sir,’ said Mary, ‘and I hope you will read the burial service over me.’

“‘To be sure I will,’ said the clergyman, ‘if I do not die before you, Mary; and now that the funeral is over, we will come to see you.’

“The next Sunday, Mr. Mason, another Wesleyan preacher, went to the village to take his turn. The cottage looked gay, and Mary

seemed in tolerable health and spirits. She was not well acquainted with Mr. Mason, for he was a *local* preacher, and had not long been accustomed to the duty. He knew, however, of the recent loss sustained by the Wesleyan denomination in that quarter, and duly informed Mr. West, on his return on the following Monday, of Mary's health and state of mind. He told Mr. West that he heard no noises, that all appeared quite tranquil, that Mary spoke a good deal of her master and mistress, and seemed to apprehend that their worthless son-in-law would come down before Mr. West should return again to the cottage. She did not account for this, neither did she speak of her death, but often said, in the course of the Sunday, 'God will do all things well.'

"When the next Saturday arrived, Mr. West set out on his long walk of seven miles to the village in question, with a heavy heart. He was not superstitious or fanciful; but poor Mary had been so earnest in her predictions that, in spite of himself, when he entered the village he felt nervous and depressed. He arrived at the cottage. It was still quite light,

on a brilliant evening in July, and the sunset splendid; but the cottage door was shut, the blinds down, or the shutters closed, and Mary's kind face was not to be seen.

“‘Is she dead then?’ he inquired, with no ordinary emotion, as a respectable woman, who was also a member of the Wesleyan society, opened the door.

“‘Yes sir, she died last Wednesday, full of faith, and full of hope;’ and she has left a few words for you, which I wrote down according to her directions. Here they are.’

‘MY DEAR FRIEND AND MINISTER,

‘When you see this letter, poor Mary will be in heaven with her beloved master and mistress, and with their more beloved Saviour. Be so kind as to preach from the text “He hath done all things well.” Soon may we also meet in glory.

‘Your affectionate friend,

‘MARY COOKSON.’

“Mr. West felt paralysed. It seemed as if the place whereon he stood was holy ground.

He wept, and prayed, and then retired to rest. He almost desired to hear some supernatural noises, but he heard none. Morning arrived. He visited the corpse of poor Mary. She appeared to look at him as when she last said, 'It will be my turn next.' He preached in the morning to a large congregation on the immortality of the soul; but in the evening the Chapel could not contain one-fourth of the assembled multitude from all the surrounding villages, who had come to hear something of poor Mary; and Mr. West was obliged, however reluctantly, to preach in the open air. He took the text which Mary had pointed out, and the impression produced on all present was profound.

"When the services were over he went to a friend's house, and supped and prayed with the family. He then took leave of them, and returned to the cottage, and asking for a candle, retired to rest. The curtains at the foot of the bed only were drawn. The night was bright; he felt fatigued and wearied with excitement, and soon fell asleep. This was about eleven o'clock. He slept soundly three

hours, but was then aroused by a loud knocking in the cupboard in his room. His first thoughts were, that perhaps the bad son-in-law had come down to the village, had arrived too late, and was now knocking outside to gain admittance. He listened again. The knocking had ceased. He concluded that he had been dreaming of recent events, and had been disturbed by some imaginary noises. He looked at his watch ; it was two o'clock. He turned round to go to sleep again, and was about closing his eyes when the curtains at the bottom of his bed suddenly parted. He expected to see the wretched son-in-law enter, and was prepared to defend himself, if attacked or insulted. He saw no one ; the door was closed, the light was burning, and the night without was stormless and cloudless. He sat up in his bed, and uttered a short but energetic prayer. The knocking in the cupboard re-commenced. This was to him a signal for rising. He dressed himself, praying all the time for wisdom and courage. He drew up the blind of his back sleeping-room, and determined to investigate fully the causes of this noise in the morn-

ing. But as he was about leaving the room, the cupboard-door flew open with some violence. ‘This is a sign,’ he said to himself, that there is to be no delay in my examination; I will proceed at once, and trust in God to protect me.’ The hammer with which he and poor Mary had ineffectually examined the boards and walls in every direction, still lay there. He took the candle in one hand, and the hammer in the other; but his hand trembled, and in spite of his faith in God he was much agitated.

“‘I must persevere,’ thought he, ‘and fear nothing. What can the head of that screw mean?’ he said, as he looked at the paper on the walls very closely and with minute attention, ‘and covered over with paper, too? I must endeavour to get it out.’ The fact was, that by knocking the paper about he had torn it, and discovered the screw. ‘It was singular that the old gentleman and lady, who loved Mary so much, should not have confided to her the secret of the exact spot where they had hidden anything of importance,—if such was the case. Perhaps they

were afraid of their son-in-law arriving here after their death and frightening the truth out of her. They were taken so suddenly ill, and like herself, had died so quickly, that they had no time to think of these things. Still she had a firm conviction that this room, and especially the cupboard, was the place of concealment. I will persevere. Who can tell but that the son-in-law may come down this very day, find some will or deeds, destroy them, and take from his own deserted and neglected children the property which may belong to them ?

“Mr. West pulled out his clasp-knife, and by its help drew out the screw. A small piece of wood fell out ; he knocked again, and another piece of wood came away, and disclosed a small aperture or little cupboard about one foot square, in which were deposited the marriage settlement of the old gentleman and lady, and the will of the former. The knocking had wholly ceased. Mr. West perused both the settlement and the will ; and kneeling down, thanked God that He had been pleased to select him as an agent in

securing to the grand-children of his deceased friends the property of which their own wretched father would undoubtedly have deprived them. When the fire took place at the solicitor's of the old gentleman and lady, their son-in-law thought that the marriage settlement was destroyed. For some time they feared so too; but it was afterwards found in the iron chest, dug out of the ruins. From that moment the old people would never trust it out of their presence. By the marriage settlement the property was to be divided amongst their children, after their death; and if no children were living, then amongst their descendants. The settlement gave power to the old gentleman or lady to deprive any son-in-law of theirs of his portion, provided his wife should be dead, if his conduct had not pleased them. This was precisely the case now, and the will of the old gentleman decided that trustees named by him should, in conjunction with the successors of those appointed by the marriage settlement, take care of the children's property till they were of age, and then divide the funds amongst them. If the son-in-law had disco-

vered the will, he would have burned it, as well as the marriage settlement.

“Mr. West was overpowered with joy. He closed up the boards again as well as he could, and took the will and deed into his custody. The address of the grand-children was still wanted ; but Mr. West felt no uneasiness on this head, as an advertisement in the public papers would probably soon discover them. Mr. West resolved to remain, in order to bury poor Mary. On Monday evening the son-in-law arrived. Mr. West would wait no longer, but proceeded to a friend’s house. On Tuesday the burial was conducted with every mark of respect ; but the son-in-law ‘was too fatigued to follow the corpse to the grave.’ On the same night he received notice from an attorney, employed by Mr. West, that the will and marriage settlement of his deceased parents had been placed in his hands, and that he must prepare to leave the next day. By these providential means all the property was saved, and the grandchildren of the old lady and gentleman were duly provided for.”

“And now what do you think of my story?” asked Sir Edward.

“Why, that it is most delightful; and I’m sure we all thank you very much indeed,” said Lucy, “so I move a vote of thanks.”

“And we second the motion,” said both the Miss Clappertons, and the motion was of course carried *nem. con.*

They had arrived at “Pickwick,”—not Mr. Dickens’s Pickwick, nor Sam Weller’s Pickwick,—but the village of Pickwick, ninety-seven miles from London, once celebrated for the splendid collection of paintings of Paul Cobb Methuen, Esquire.

The light of the moon enabled the travellers to look at the pretty village of Box.

“Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer’d the labouring swain.”

And in about an hour afterwards, the lights and life of Bath gladdened the eyes of its delighted though somewhat fatigued beholders. It was nine o’clock. The roads had been good, the post-boys had been well paid, and the horses therefore had done their duty.

The carriage drove to Milsom Street. Some of the servants, previously sent down, had prepared dinner,—all was in perfect order ; the Miss Clappertons were in ecstacies ; Miss Lucy said, “ really they were too kind to bring her to such a superb place ;” and Sir Edward looked, though he did not say as much, “ Have I not managed well ?”

CHAPTER IX.

I, under fair pretences of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glossy court'sy,
Baited with reason not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares.

MILTON'S *Comus*.

LORD SWAINTON waited the arrival of the next day's post with feelings of some anxiety. The inn was comfortable, the old servant of the family, the inn-keeper, most obliging; many and many a time did he enter the parlour where his lordship wrote letters, notes, and *billets-doux*, to pass away time, and recapitulated to him all his wonderful doings at the various contested elections in that borough during the last twenty years; how he had been complimented from the hustings, abused by counsel, cross-examined in a committee-room of the House of Commons, prosecuted

for bribery as a direct and positive agent, and acquitted; and then what snuff-boxes, guns, and even gold watches for himself, wife, and children, he had received from successful candidates. Then he would recount how he kidnapped electors who were about to vote for the other side, made them drink bottle after bottle of well-brandied port and sherry, until they were insensible of being conveyed to the hay-loft and there kept until the election was over. How, in other cases, letters were adroitly sent from London, a few days before the election, informing aged electors that their children were dying in London, and begging them not to lose a moment, but to proceed to their sick beds without delay; and then, when they arrived, to their astonishment, though not regret, they found that an electioneering trick had been played off upon them, and that their children were in perfect health. Then, how others had been invited to sea in a steam-boat on an excursion for a day or two's pleasure, prior to the fatigues of an election, and had then been landed in France, and assured by the captain that the machinery of the engines was so deranged, that he could

not get back in less than a few days ; all these, and various other manœuvres, were recounted with joy and smiles to the approving Lord Swainton, who nodded his head, opened his eyes as widely as he could, and exclaimed at the end of each new recital, “ Beggars description ! ”

At length the mail arrived. “ Is there a letter for me ? ” inquired his lordship.

“ What name ? ” asked the youth who opened the window at the post-office.

“ William Gurney, Esq., ” was the reply.

“ There is ; ” said the youth, placing in his lordship’s hands the letter of Sir Edward.

“ Beggars description ! ” muttered Lord Swainton to himself, as he turned away with his letter ; “ the readiest, ’ most regular, admirable man I ever knew. But let us see what he says. ”

Lord Swainton read the few first sentences with unbounded delight, and was truly gratified to find that his new friends were *accabléd* with a sense of unspeakable gratitude for his truly *disinterested* services. But when he approached the closing phrases, he felt a little fidgety, if not a little nervous. He

perceived that Sir Edward did not expect to pay the whole of the second 3000*l.* unless a contest should occur, and in that case the sum he, Lord Swainton, had made out of the first 3000*l.* was probably the whole of his benefit.

“Beggars description !” said his lordship, as he walked up and down the streets of Warnstable ; “something must be done ! If I encourage an opposition, as I might easily do, were I disposed, the second 3000*l.* would then be wholly expended in *bonâ fide* election expenses, and I should not be able to rescue a dollar for myself. If, on the other hand, I prevent, by my admirable management, a contest, he will not ‘come down with the blunt,’ and I shall be jockeyed. Beggars description ! What’s to be done ?”

For more than an hour his lordship turned the matter over in his mind.

“In for a penny, in for a pound,” said Lord Swainton ; “a faint heart never won a fair lady, nor a thousand sovereigns either ; now or never is the word, and I must strike the iron whilst it is hot. I’ll write to Sir Edward and

tell him, that as he appears rather to regret the engagement he has entered into respecting the second 3000*l.*, and evidently did not understand that the total sum of 6000*l.* would be absolutely required, whether there should be an opposition or not, the great expense consisting in the price of the votes,—he had another friend who would gladly step into his shoes, and would return not only the 3000 sovereigns, but also the 300*l.* he had placed in his hands to meet small and miscellaneous expenses. “I am sure,” thought his lordship; “Sir Edward will not accept the offer, and in that case I shall receive, on my return to Bath, the whole of the remaining 3000*l.*”

Having resolved on this line of conduct, Lord Swainton hastened to the hotel and wrote as follows:

“MY DEAR SIR EDWARD,

“First of all let me thank you for the very kind and amiable things you and your charming sisters have been pleased to say in the letter I have just received. Believe me that I have the most unaffected pleasure in

serving you and gratifying them, and that the consciousness of doing a good action brings with it its own reward.

“But now to business. I think it is quite clear, from the terms of your letter, that you have not understood this affair rightly; and therefore I will seek to put it on its proper footing without delay. You thought that the sum of 3000*l.* transmitted in the chest to Sir Oscar’s, was to cover all expenses, or nearly all, in case there should be no contest. This is an error. Whether there be a contest, or no contest, the second sum of 3000*l.* will be indispensable. The voters here must be paid just the same, and the same price, in all cases and events. I think, then, the best plan will be for you not to proceed any further in this matter. Draw upon me at sight, at the Royal Hotel here, whose landlord, I find, was an old servant in my family, and is the most influential person in the borough, for the sum of 3,300*l.* being the sum you sent to Sir Oscar’s, and the sum you also placed in my hands to meet miscellaneous expenses. I will prevail on Sir Oscar to give me a letter of recommendation in favour of another candidate, a

friend of mine, who is dying to get into Parliament; and in this way the matter will be satisfactorily arranged. He will reimburse me all the expenses I have been put to, so that I shall not be out of pocket one farthing; and you need not, therefore, feel any annoyance or apprehension on that ground. Do not say that you are ashamed of having given me all this trouble for nothing; for the little unimportant mistake which has occurred is of no sort of consequence to me, and is, no doubt, to be attributed to myself in not having been sufficiently clear about the matter. If, on the other hand, you still desire to persist in your candidature, I will be answerable for your success; but you must write by return of post, and say so in the most decided terms. I will then advance 1500*l.* to the son of my old servant and head electioneering agent here, on account, and proceed to Bath to confer with you, to prepare your address to the electors, and to take the necessary measures to ensure the press in these parts in your favour. You will then have the 3000*l.* ready on my arrival. Mind, whichever way you decide, I shall be fully satisfied; only oblige me in one thing, and I will not

ask another favour from you,—and that is, if you determine on resigning the borough, draw on me at once for the 3,300*l.* through a Bath bank, and send it on at once for payment, as of course I cannot be seeking to serve two parties at the same time. Either, then, be prepared to place in my hands the second 3000*l.* on my arrival at Bath, or draw on me for 3,300*l.* at sight, and close this affair. In either case, with best compliments and respectful assurances to yourself and the amiable ladies, I am, as ever, my dear Sir Edward,

“Most truly yours,

“SWAINTON.”

Lord Swainton, on reading his letter over, exclaimed, “Admirable!” “Beggars description!”

His lordship ran rather than walked to the Post-office.

“It is too late,” said the youth, when his lordship knocked at the Post-office window.

“I will pay extra,” replied his lordship, in an agony of excitement.

“I have just closed the bag,” said the youth, “and am going to give it to the mail-cart.”

“I will give you a sovereign if you will open it,” replied Lord Swainton, “and feel obliged to you into the bargain.”

The youth smiled,—said “he would not do it for anybody else,” by which it is to be presumed he meant for anybody but the sovereign; and Lord Swainton saw, with his own delighted eyes, the bag unlocked, and the letter in question safely deposited.

“Beggars description!” said his lordship, as the mail-cart drove off; “there goes my letter. But what will be the reply? Upon that hang all my prospects, not only for the season, but for life. If I secure only 1000*l.* in addition to the sum already made, I am saved; but if Sir Edward takes me at my word, and draws on me for the 3,300*l.* and the bill goes back unpaid, I am ruined! Beggars description! But I have often been ruined already,—so it will only be ruin No. 100.”

How to pass the next forty-eight hours was a difficulty. There was no billiard-table open at that season of the year; there were no gaming-tables. No one was at Warnstable whom he knew. What was to be done? He decided on making an excursion. He knew

every lane, street, and alley in the borough where he had been staying. So he determined to take a trip to Exeter.

“I have some important business at Exeter,” said his lordship to the landlord of the hotel; “but shall return in two days.” To prevent any suspicion, however, he paid his bill before departure, and declared “that the charge was not high enough.”

“This is not the usual fault found with us,” replied the landlord, very honestly and truly.

“Indeed!” said his lordship, with a sham look of astonishment, “much too cheap,—much too cheap. Beggars description!”

Lord Swainton started for Exeter, travelling all night, to the no small annoyance of his Italian courier, who wondered what in the world so rich a man as his lordship could find amusing in scouring the country in all directions, at so inclement a season of the year.

His lordship passed the next day at Exeter, where there happened to him the following adventure.

“Cramwell! Cramwell!” cried a well-known voice behind him, just as he was entering the cathedral; “why, what in the world can have

brought you to these parts, and on Christmas-eve too! You are the very man I want to see. I have got into a little trouble here, and know not how to get out of it."

The person who stopped him was a half-pay officer, once well known at Bath for his gambling and non-paying propensities, and who had set off from that city somewhat in debt, not only to his gambling friends and cronies, but also to a few butchers, bakers, and so forth. One of these tradesmen had now come to settle at Exeter, and had just then by chance met Captain Smallman.

"Well, Captain," said Lord Swainton, "you call me Cramwell; but my name is Swainton now."

"Oh! indeed, my lord," replied the Captain, "I had no idea you had come to your title. I hope the estates are as large as your heart."

"Indeed they are not, Captain," said his lordship. "Poor as a church mouse—hungry as a starved dog!—but still, I think I owe you ten pounds?"

"I believe you do, my lord," replied the Captain, "and they would be exceedingly acceptable."

“Then here they are,” said his lordship, putting them into his friend’s hands, “and I hope they will enable you to settle with your creditor; for I suppose something of that sort is the difficulty you allude to?”

“Just the very thing,” replied the half-pay captain; “really it’s quite surprising that I should meet you at such a moment.”

“Ah, it is indeed,” said his lordship, “if you knew all. One good turn deserves another, and you can be of some use to me.”

“That’s good again, Cramwell—I beg your pardon, my lord,” replied the Captain. “What can I do?”

“I will tell you. I may want a sham candidate for a borough, just to urge on a real one. If the real man hangs back, it may be necessary to have another in the field; and be sufficient to excite the other to come down with—”

“The blunt,” said the Captain.

“Precisely so, my good fellow. You are up to everything. Never catch a weasel asleep. Beggars description!”

“You are too good,” said the Captain, chinking the ten sovereigns in a pocket long

unaccustomed to such visitors; “but I am really ashamed to be detaining you in the street—will you do me the favour to visit my humble lodgings, my lord? I have a knuckle of ham to offer you, and a glass of the best cider in Devonshire, fully equal to the finest sherry.”

“No bad things either,” replied his lordship; and they proceeded along the streets, in front of the very shop whose inmate was a creditor of the Captain.”

“You are a couple of bad uns,” said the shopkeeper, as they passed by his door; “one has owed me 10*l.* for five years, and run away to avoid paying me; and the other,—you old cheat you, I forget your name,—has owed me 6*l.* for more than seven years.”

Lord Swainton stopped. “I owe you 6*l.*?” asked his lordship, in a tone of defiance and fury, until he saw who it was.—It was Mr. Piecrust, the baker.

“Yes you, my Lord Forget-your-debts—for I forget your name,” replied the baker,—“*you, you, you* owe me 6*l.*” And a crowd of people who heard the loud cries of the vender of loaves and flour began to assemble.

“Take your dirty 6*l.* you scoundrel,” said his lordship, throwing six sovereigns on the counter.

“I owe you but 5*l.*” said the Captain.

“You owe me 10*l.*” replied the baker; “but give me 5*l.* and we are quits.”

“Give me a receipt in full of all demands,” replied the Captain, and the receipt was given. The baker was delighted—bowed most respectfully to the gentlemen, and had the impudence to say “he should be proud to serve them again.”

“Beggars description!” said his lordship; and they proceeded to the humble cottage of the Captain.

There his lordship spent the day. Old chums together, they recounted their mutual exploits; and the remaining five sovereigns in the pocket of the Captain made him both merry and warm.

“If my *real* candidate should give me any trouble,” said his lordship, as he took leave of the Captain, who accompanied him to the door of the inn, “I shall write to you; and you will send me such a letter as I shall draw out, not altering a word. If, on the contrary,

he should go on as he has begun, I shall not trouble you any farther on this business, except to come over to the election and enjoy some of the festivities."

"Agreed to," replied the captain; bidding his lordship "Good night!" with much fervour.

"Those ten sovereigns were well paid," thought his lordship, as he took his candlestick and proceeded to his bedroom in the inn at Exeter. "I have made Smallman mine for life—there's nothing he would not do for me now. This is the best day's arrangement I have made for a long time. Beggars description! I am wholly indifferent now, what may be the reply of Sir Edward.—In the first place, I know he is mad to get into Parliament.—In the second place, I am fully convinced that the Clappertons are rich, and that money is no object.—In the third place, I do *not* believe that he would rather abandon his seat than risk another 3000*l.*—Fourthly.—With all their anxiety to belong to the fashionable world, and with their conviction that I have the power to introduce them to the polite circles, they would, after all, be fearful of displeasing me.—Fifthly.—It would be quite contrary to the

laws of nature for any man to take back 3,300*l.* when you *insist* upon his doing so.—Sixthly.—Supposing such a thing *should* occur, and that Sir Edward should determine to abandon the seat rather than expend 3000*l.* more, unless in the case of a contested election — well, what then?—why, then I would send off a courier to Bath, to inform him that a Whig candidate, Captain Smallman, had started since I last wrote; I would brush off to Smallman, and send him onwards with his addresses and his circulars, and would convince Sir Edward that the moment had arrived when he must now carry into effect his original intentions; for that, as an Opposition candidate had come forward, the burgesses would not seek for a third man; whilst the second man, Captain Smallman, had not the slightest chance of success. Beggars description!” said his lordship several times, as was his habit to do when much pleased or much agitated—“ Beggars description!”

Fully prepared for all possible contingencies, Lord Swainton retired to rest. He slept heartily and rose early.

“ I have an improvement upon last night’s plan,” reflected his lordship; “ I will take

Smallman with me as far as Blackly, which is within ten or twelve miles of the borough. There is a place for him in my carriage. It will cost nothing. If the letter from Sir Edward be favourable, the Captain can come on and spend a day with me at Warnstable. If, on the contrary, the letter be unfavourable, an hour will take me to him, and we can arrange all our plans for his entry into the place as a Whig candidate. I must be off to him directly, and obtain his assent."

The captain had not risen when Lord Swain-ton arrived at the cottage.

"Where's the Captain's room?" asked his lordship of the very pretty waiting-woman.

"Up stairs, the front door," replied Susan; "you cannot lose your way, my lord."

"No — not if I had such a pretty guide as you are," said his lordship, with one of his best smiles; "though it is just such angels as you are, who turn our heads and make us lose our wits."

"But you do not turn ours," replied Susan very archly; and his lordship felt sorely that he was getting old. Susan showed him upstairs.

“Holloa ! Captain ! Captain !” cried his lordship ; “ what do you in bed at this time of the morning ? ”

“ Sleep, to be sure,” replied Smallman, who had a vast aversion to being roused to another day’s miseries and annoyances so early in the morning.

“ I want you to be off with me to Blackly,” said his lordship. “ I have a seat in my carriage — and we can breakfast on the road.”

“ Oh ! with all my heart,” said the Captain, who remembered that it was Christmas-day, and that he had wondered when he went to bed where he should eat his Christmas pudding, for he had no chance of having one at home ; “ and let our breakfast be a good one, worthy of the day.”

“ Beggars description ! ” said his lordship, descending the stairs, “ to think I forgot Christmas-day ! Baron of beef — Norfolk turkey — sumptuous chine — glorious pudding — mince pies — old family hall — tenants assembled — foaming tankards — blazing faggots — blind-man’s-buff — happy days — joyous hours — all — all — fled ! Beggars description ! ”

“I am sure he is thinking of former days and happier times. Poor man!” thought Susan, observing the reflective mood of his lordship, as she opened the door of the dining-room. “So lords have troubles as well as country servants. I was to have dined with my father and mother to-day — but now the captain is going out, I suppose I must not leave the house.”

“Did you speak to me, my lord?” asked Susan, as his lordship repeated two or three times his favourite phrase of “beggars description.”

“I did not speak at all, my dear,” replied his lordship. “I was only thinking, that if you had a piece of mistletoe in your kitchen, I could show you a pretty trick that they used to play some thirty years ago.”

“And that they play still,” said Susan archly. “Oh no, my lord, there’s no mistletoe *there*!”

Susan laid a great emphasis on the word “there,” and she did so advisedly. She wished to know whether she could dine with her large family circle, consisting of her father and mother, brothers and sisters, and sweet-

heart too, that day, or not; she feared that her fate would be to remain at home, as the captain was going abroad.

“No mistletoe in the kitchen,” said his lordship; “it is somewhere else, then.”

“That *may be*,” replied Susan.

“Then where, pray?” asked Lord Swain-ton, who began to imagine that it was in some other room in the house, and that a kiss beneath its white berries and green branches might still be stolen.

“At my father’s house,” said Susan.

“Oh! then you have a father?” inquired his lordship.

“Indeed I have, my lord; and a kinder and a better father does not live in Exeter, no, nor in all the world neither; I was to have dined to-day with him, and with my mother too, and with all my brothers and sisters, and —”

“Your sweetheart, perhaps,” interrupted his lordship.

“That’s not impossible,” replied Susan, with blushing cheeks; “but father will have *one* less at his table now, for the captain is going out of Exeter with your lordship, and I

dare say he will not choose to have the house left alone."

"Then I will stop and take care of it," said his lordship, "for, by Jove, your father shall not be deprived of the flower of his flock for either Sir Edward or all the electors in the world. You shall dine with your father to-day, my dear; make your heart easy upon that point; and if I cannot kiss your pretty pouting lips under your father's mistletoe, your sweetheart shall."

"I thank you a thousand times," said Susan, looking delighted. "You are, indeed, very kind, my lord; but pray do not say anything about it to the Captain; he might be vexed that I mentioned it to you."

"Oh! leave that to me," said his lordship; "if there's no other way of managing the matter, I will keep the house, and dine with your master. We can have our dinner from the inn."

The Captain came down. He had dressed himself in his best, and was evidently anticipating pleasure from his excursion.

"Susan," said the captain, "you have heard I am going out of town for some days with his

lordship; "just put me up a shirt, a pair of stockings, my razor and shaving-box, hair, nail, and tooth-brushes, in a silk handkerchief. I am sorry you will be disappointed in your promised pleasure to-day, but you know it would not do to leave the house. I promised to stay at home, and dine as I could, that you might go; but now this is impossible. I will make this up to you as soon as I come back; just step to your father and acquaint him of this, as soon as you have made up my little bundle; his lordship will excuse my keeping him waiting."

Susan's heart would have burst with grief at this moment if she had not entertained some hope from his lordship's promised intervention. She did not feel displeased either with her master or Lord Swinton, for both had behaved well; but she thought of her father's look of disappointment, and of his sigh of sorrow when she should tell him that she could not come; and in spite of all, she would have shed a flood of tears before her master had finished what he had to say, had it not been for the presence of his lordship. Susan looked, however, perfect obedience, and said—

"Very well, sir, I will do so."

"Stop, Susan," said his lordship, "I have another thought. I will spend to-day in Exeter with your master. We will dine together. The dinner I will order from the inn. You need not make up the bundle, or go to your father's. It may be the last Christmas-day you may spend with him."

Susan said not a word. The captain looked rather annoyed; and his lordship perceived it.

"Oh, I have thought of a better plan still. Do you not know some good, honest old woman, who would, for a shilling or two, come and keep the house for you, if your master would allow it?"

Susan looked cheered by the thought, and the captain brightened up.

"To be sure she does," said the captain. "Poor widow Flaxman would be glad to earn a trifle, and I would trust her with untold gold."

"I thank you, sir, very much indeed," said Susan; "and I thank you too, my lord, though not so much for myself as for my poor father; for it would be such a disappointment to him."

“And to somebody else too,” added his lordship. “Beggars description !” And then putting his hand into his pocket and taking out half-a-crown, he said, “Here, this will pay the widow Flaxman.”

“Oh, thank you, my lord, a thousand times,” said Susan ; “I shall not forget this Christmas-day as long as I live.” And away she bustled, first to prepare the bundle, and then to look after the widow.

All this was effected in five minutes. Lord Swainton and the captain then left the cottage to proceed to the inn, and commence their journey.

“Beggars description,” said his lordship, when they had advanced a few steps from the cottage door ; “I have forgotten something ; I must go back.”

“What is it ?” asked the captain ; “let me go back for you.”

“No, no,” said Lord Swainton, with some vehemence. “I shall not be a moment.”

His lordship ran back. Susan opened the door. Lord Swainton stepped into the sitting-room. “Susan,” said he, “I forgot to give

you half-a-crown for yourself, and — though there be no mistletoe —”

Susan made no resistance, but allowed his lordship to kiss her. The fact was, she felt grateful, and she knew not how to refuse him.

“ I forgot to give your girl a trifle,” said his lordship on rejoining the captain, “ and I went back to do so. Half-a-crown is an object to her, whilst it is none to me.”

The captain had his suspicions, for he knew his lordship was always fond of pretty lips, but he said not a word.

“ And now for *écarté* ! eh ! captain ? ” asked his lordship, as they drove out of Exeter, after having partaken of a splendid breakfast at the inn. “ We will play for pence, halfpence, or farthings, if you will ; but something or other we must stake, just to keep up the excitement.”

“ Always the same, my lord,” replied the captain, “ always fond of excitement.”

“ Yes, I feed on excitement, drink excitement, sleep excitement, walk, talk, think excitement ! Nothing like excitement. Beggars description ! ”

“ Ace of Clubs ! ” said the captain, as he turned the card.

“Then I shall lose all the day,” said his lordship. “Never won in my life when the game opened with Ace of Clubs. That card has been my unlucky one through life. I fear it is an ill omen for my letter from Sir Edward.”

“I hope not,” replied the captain; “but simply a good omen for me that I shall win a few of your sixpences.”

“Shall the stake be sixpence, then?” asked his lordship.

“Yes,” replied the captain, who afterwards passed sixteen times, and thus won eight shillings.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon of Christmas-day when the carriage drove up to the Swan Inn, at the clean pretty town of Blackly. As they had breakfasted at the inn at Exeter before starting, contrary to their original plan, they were both desperately hungry.

“What can we have for dinner?” asked his lordship as they alighted — “and directly too?”

“We have as fine a piece of roast-beef as ever twisted on a spit,” answered the inn-keeper, “and it is just ready to be taken up.

It would have been put away to get cold in the larder, for our coach-passengers in the morning, but, if you think you can fancy that, you shall have the first cut."

"Excellent!" said his lordship; "beggars description!"

"And have you anything in the shape of plum-pudding or mince-pies?" asked the captain.

"Both," added the innkeeper; "and both ready and hot."

"We are quite in luck's way," said his lordship. "This looks well for the letter. I am afraid, however, it will be late before I arrive at Warnstable;" and turning to the landlord, added—"Look alive, then, my friend; quick as lightning and sharp as a needle! Beggars description!"

The beef was admirable, the pudding delicious, and the mince-pies unexceptionable. The landlord produced his very best port, as his lordship "was good enough to say that money was no object." In fact, he placed on the table two bottles of wine which had been twenty-five years in bottle, which was pronounced to be "nectar!"

Dinner, wine, talk, and a rubber or two at whist, playing "double dummy," brought the hour of the clock to nine.

"I am afraid I shall not get my letters to-night," said his lordship, "if I have another rubber. I must press on as quickly as I can." They counted points and games, and Lord Swainton had lost twelve shillings."

"Twelve and eight make twenty," said his lordship, throwing down a sovereign, which the Captain put in the same pocket in which were most snugly deposited the five remaining from those he had received the preceding day.

"And there are two more to meet your expenses to Warnstable," added his lordship; "for either you will come in, as a candidate, or else spend a day or two with me before my return to Bath."

"My lord, the carriage is ready," said the Italian courier, who had relished beef and plum-pudding on Christmas day more than fish and macaroni; and in two minutes the carriage moved on.

"Pleasant times these," said the Captain to himself as he called for a pint of punch, hot and sweet. After which he went to bed

very nearly "glorious," and dreamt of hustings, of flags, of music, and of speeches, and slept twelve hours.

As soon as Lord Swainton entered his carriage he went off to sleep, and did not wake till within a mile of the borough.

"What are those lights?" asked his lordship of the postilion, as he saw in the distance some which he did not precisely recognise as old friends.

"They are the lights in Warnstable," replied the post-boy.

"Ah, indeed! you have come very quickly, then: just stop at the post-office as you go by; there is a letter for me."

"The post-office has been closed an hour ago," replied the lad; "but I will stop if your lordship pleases, though it is of no use since the post-master does not live there."

Lord Swainton felt disappointed, but still he ordered the post-boy to drive there, for he remembered the sovereign he had given to the youth for despatching his letter, and it might so happen that the same youth would be there again.

“ Knock louder,” said his lordship, as his courier descended from the rumble, and tapped at the post-office door. But no one replied. There was no light.

“ Beggars description !” said his lordship, as the carriage rolled on to the hotel. “ There lies a letter for me of incalculable importance, and yet I cannot procure it !”

His lordship arrived at the inn, took soda water and brandy, talked with the landlord, thought about his letter, went to bed anxious, and woke early.

CHAPTER X.

Man is the merriest species of the creation ; all above and below him are serious.

ADDISON.

THE morning after the arrival of Sir Edward and suite at Bath they all rose late. On arriving at the breakfast table there were letters and newspapers from all parts. Newspapers from London and from Warnstable. Letters from London, and even from Clapham. One was from Mrs. Colonel Dawson, addressed to her beloved Lucy, enclosing her a 5*l.* note which she had “entirely forgotten to give her before leaving, that she might not be without pocket money ;” another from Sir Felix Montague to Sir Edward, expressive of his regret that “the birds had flown,” when he had gone down to “pay his *devoirs* to the ladies before their departure ; a third from Sir Edward’s bankers, advising him to apply to

the bank at Bath in correspondence with them, to supply him with the 3000*l.* in gold, if he should require it, and containing a letter of introduction from them to the Bath bankers, stating that whatever sums Sir Edward thought fit to draw, they would be responsible for at sight. There was also a fourth letter, which was opened the first by Sir Edward. It was the letter from Lord Swainton. As Sir Edward read it he looked annoyed, then read it again.

“What have you to vex you, my dear Edward?” asked the elder Miss Clapperton affectionately; “I am sure something unpleasant has occurred.”

“Nothing at all, I assure you,” replied Sir Edward; and then casting a side glance at his sister, he made a well understood sign that he did not desire to speak of business before Lucy.

When the breakfast was over, Sir Edward left the room, and Miss Clapperton followed him. Her sister remained behind to keep Lucy company, that nothing calculated to diminish the life and cheerfulness of the party might even be suspected.

“I am dreadfully afraid I have offended

his lordship," said Sir Edward, as he entered the drawing-room, and handed the letter to his sister. "These noblemen are such high-spirited fellows, they cannot brook the least alteration, or even a doubt of the excellence of their plans or arrangements. Come, read the letter, however, and see what you think of it."

Miss Clapperton read the letter.

"I fear so, too, Edward," she replied, "but what noble conduct! what truly gentlemanly and dignified behaviour! Not only does he not reproach you, not only does he take all the blame as to the misunderstanding on himself, not only does he agree to cancel all he has done for your benefit, not only does he direct you, if you have altered your mind in consequence of this new feature of the case, to draw upon him at sight for the 3000*l.*; but so delicate is he on every point of honour, that he even requests you also to draw for the 300*l.* which you placed in his hands for travelling and miscellaneous expenses. This is admirable conduct indeed; there is no class like noblemen, Edward; they are really gentlemen and men of honour at heart."

"Yes, my dear sister," said Sir Edward;

“and he has done even more than what you have referred to; for he goes the length of offering to advance 1500*l.* for me, provided I go on! provided, indeed! why, how could he doubt it?”

“Oh! of course you will,” replied his sister; “but what could show more finished delicacy than this part of his letter? ‘Do not say that you are ashamed of having given me all this trouble for nothing, for the little unimportant mistake which has occurred, is of no sort of consequence to me, and is, no doubt, to be attributed to myself, in not having been sufficiently clear about the matter.’ And then, again, ‘mind, whichever way you decide, I shall be fully satisfied.’ Oh! really his conduct is so perfect, that we might truly and justly make use of his favourite term, and say, ‘It beggars description!’”

“Indeed we might,” said Sir Edward, “that is just my feeling; but what is best to be done?”

“Why, there can be no doubt as to that, Edward,” replied his sister; “write to say that you are sure all the mistake is yours; that whether there be a contest or not, the

other 3000*l.* are ready at a moment's notice, and that you place yourself entirely, wholly, in his hands. And mind you present to him our very best compliments, and say that we long — quite long to see him again."

"Well, my dear Charlotte, that is precisely my opinion," replied Sir Edward; "but as Sophia has a very long, cool head, I should like to have her opinion too. Just ask her to step in for a few minutes, while you remain with Lucy."

Sophia thought precisely the same as her sister and brother; and Sir Edward sat down and wrote the following letter:—

"MY VERY DEAR LORD,

"I have just received your very kind, and, at the same time, most considerate and important letter. I am much more than annoyed, I am truly grieved at all the trouble I am giving you, especially as I am convinced that I am alone to blame for the momentary misunderstanding which has taken place with respect to the second 3000*l.* My sisters are precisely of the same opinion; they say that they are sure you are not to be blamed. Thus, you perceive, my dear lord, that you

are looked on as immaculate by the ladies. But be this as it may, and it really is of no sort of importance, except on account of the extra trouble I have given you, I beg you will consider that I am ready with the second 3000*l.* in gold, at a moment's notice, and that I hope you will be able so to arrange as not to advance any sum on my account. It is quite enough to devote such talents and influence as yours, my lord, to me, without putting yourself to any even momentary inconvenience by the advance of 1500*l.* to the agent. I reckon myself also peculiarly fortunate in having for my agent a former servant of your lordship's family, and I feel no doubt whatever relative to my success.

“When your lordship shall arrive at Bath, you will find all ready for your reception, and a very pretty girl withal, who longs to hear your amusing stories, and to become acquainted with one of whom we have spoken in terms of such well-merited admiration.

“My sisters beg you to receive their united best compliments, and I beg you to believe, my dear lord, how truly I am,

“Yours very gratefully and truly,
“E. CLAPPERTON.”

Both the Miss Clappertons perused the letter of their brother, and they pronounced it to be admirable.

It was now Christmas-eve. Sir Edward and his sisters gave sumptuous directions for the next day, and resolved on doing justice to Christmas festivities.

About two o'clock a carriage drove up. The door trembled again beneath the weight and oft-repeated strokes of the knocker. Who could it be? It was "THE MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES."

"Ask him to walk in," said Sir Edward, when the servant announced his arrival.

"Pray be seated, sir. I am happy to see you."

"Your most humble servant," said the master, turning to the ladies; "is this your first visit to Bath? I do not remember having had the honour of having your names on my book before, ladies. I thought there were but two Miss Clappertons?"

"There are only two," said Sir Edward; "but Miss Lucy Dawson, daughter of Colonel Dawson, whose bravery is so well known, and who received the Waterloo-medal, has accompanied my sisters."

“Indeed!” said the master; “daughter of the celebrated Colonel Dawson. Most admirable officer, brave man; no two opinions respecting your father, madam,” turning to Miss Lucy; “it is a great satisfaction to know that the daughter of so brave and excellent a man has condescended to honour Bath with a visit.”

Miss Lucy blushed, and then muttered something about “very happy — very kind — and had longed always to see Bath.”

“Are you fond of dancing, ladies?” asked the Master of the Ceremonies.

“We are all of us passionately fond of it,” replied Miss Sophia; “and that is one of Bath’s greatest attractions to us.”

“I need not ask you, Sir Edward, if you have come to take the waters. I presume not. The appearance of yourself and your party would at once indicate that our healing springs are not required by you.”

“Why, I think not, sir,” replied Sir Edward; “and yet I believe Miss Dawson has some intention of trying them.”

“Does her health then require it?” asked the master in a sort of serious under-tone,

indicating *real* or affected interest. "If she takes them medicinally I would advise her first to consult a medical man, of whom we have several here highly distinguished for their talents and gentlemanly bearing; but if Miss Dawson's health should not require her to drink them, she had better wholly abstain, for they are of too powerful a nature to be negative in their results; they do much good or great harm."

Miss Lucy said, "that her papa and mamma thought they might prove beneficial to her, but that, as she had not received any positive directions from them on the subject, she should 'let well alone.'"

Sir Edward "thought she should consult some eminent physician if necessary, and asked the Master of the Ceremonies whom he would recommend."

"In the arduous and truly important post confided to my care," replied the master with much dignity, "I endeavour, Sir Edward, to adopt the golden rule, of doing as I would be done by. You may easily imagine that were I to patronise any medical man here, his fortune would be made. But then what would

become of the others? I have, therefore, laid it down as a rule not to recommend any one; but when appealed to, as I now am, simply to repeat the names of the medical chiefs of this city in alphabetical order, and leave those who consult me to decide for themselves. Thus we have, Sir William Allcure, — and Sir James Buzzard, — Mr. Bolus the apothecary, — Mr. Catch the surgeon, — Dr. Dovetail the accoucheur, — Dr. Eye the oculist — Dr. Fondle, who is very generally called in, in diseases of children, — Mr. Gimblet the aurist. — Mr. Hurt the dentist, — Mr. Lance the cupper, — and Mr. Potion, Mr. Powder, Mr Pilula and several other general practitioners, — not to forget the celebrated Monsieur Pedicure, the distinguished chiropodist.”

“Oh, what droll names,” said Sophia.

“And how appropriate, too,” remarked Lucy.

“All men of first-rate talent in their respective spheres,” observed the master of the ceremonies; “but I hope, ladies, though they are all my kind dear friends, you may have no occasion to consult them.”

“I presume, Sir Edward, you have taken a box at the theatre?”

“Indeed, sir, I have not, I am sorry to say; but I was thinking of doing so this morning.”

“If I can be of any service in recommending the best box to you, and where you will see as well as hear, and hear as well as see, I shall be truly happy.”

“Indeed you are most obliging,” said Sir Edward; “I will do myself the pleasure of accepting your offer. If you will fix your own hour, I will meet you there.”

The master of the ceremonies fixed four—and then rising most gracefully, bowing most elegantly, and retiring with dignity, vanished into thin air, or else, which is most probable, drove off in his vehicle.

“Rather prosy,” said Miss Lucy.

“Oh, do you think so?” asked Miss Clapperton; “I was so much pleased with him.”

“And I, too,” said Sophia.

“I was neither pleased nor displeased,” observed Sir Edward; “I suppose, he is omnipotent here; mind, young ladies, we must all be on our P’s and Q’s until his lordship shall arrive, and set us all right.”

Sir Edward and the Miss Clappertons read

through the rules and regulations which the master of the ceremonies had left them, and the following programme of amusements :

“ Monday night—Dress Ball.

“ Wednesday night—Concert.

“ Thursday night—Fancy Ball.

“ Friday night—Card Assembly.”

“ Exquisite !” exclaimed Sophia.

“ Oh, my dear, how delicious !” said Charlotte, addressing herself to Lucy.

“ It is indeed !” she replied. “ Dress balls—Cotillon balls,—I hope they begin early.”

“ Oh, yes,” said Sir Edward, “ at eight o’clock, and finish at midnight.”

“ Minuets, too !” cried Sophia.

“ And country-dances !” exclaimed Charlotte.

So the girls began dancing beforehand, and Sir Edward repeated the lines :—

“ What joy at the ball, what delight have I found,
By all the bright circles encompass’d around !
I’ve read how the goddesses meet all above,
And throng the immortal assemblies of Jove.
When, join’d with the Graces, fair Venus appears,
Ambrosial sweet odours perfume all the spheres,
But the goddess of love, and the Graces, and all
Must yield to the beauties I’ve seen at the ball.

For Jove never felt such a joy at his heart,
Such a heat as these sweet charming creatures impart,
In short, in fine women there really is something,
When they meet altogether, that 's quite overcoming."

The ladies laughed heartily, but danced on ;
and Sir Edward went to the theatre to choose
his box.

" This theatre was founded by General
Palmer's father, was it not?" asked Sir Edward
of the box-keeper.

" It was sir, indeed, but the General is no
gainer by it. He has been, I think, a most ill-
used as well as unfortunate man. In the Post-
office business he has been sadly tricked —
and —"

" Oh I know nothing of politics at Bath,"
said Sir Edward. " I know Palmer's claret
is excellent wine, though too pure and unadul-
terated, I believe, to suit every one's taste. I
know no more of the General than that, and
that is all to his credit."

The next day was Christmas-day. Church
at St. Mary's, Bathwick; a ride from Milsom
Street to Walcot Parade, and to the Ferry,
and Henrietta Street; a visit to the Great
Pump-room and a saunter on the parades, fully
occupied them until dusk ; and preparations

for dinner, and for the reception of two recent acquaintances whom Sir Edward had invited to join the family circle, engaged all their attention until the hour of six. The two new acquaintances were old friends of Colonel Dawson, to whom he had addressed letters introducing Sir Edward; and as they were mostly at liberty when dinner or even supper parties were proposed to them, they accepted the rather late invitation given by Sir Edward, when he called on them, on the previous day. The fact was, that the baronet had made up his mind "to make a splash at Bath," and therefore to become well-acquainted with everything relating to that splendid city and its society as quickly as possible, so that no time might be lost before their fashionable enjoyments should begin, in making inquiries and observations.

The first of these new acquaintances was Major Browne, who had seen some service in India, was a widower, had only one son, who was at Calcutta; he had lived seven years in Bath, was highly respected, and knew every one; his greatest pleasures were walking and backgammon.

The second was Colonel Wright, an old

bachelor, who had distinguished himself in the Peninsula, and reposed on his laurels. He loved dancing, or rather dancing-walking; for he would not derange a curl on his head, or turn hastily round to save his own life, or even that of his handsome sister who kept his house: but he was "devoted to the female sex," a sworn enemy to gaming, was most rigid in the payment of all bills on the first Monday of every month, and enjoyed an excellent reputation for being quite *comme il faut* and "very respectable." He was never guilty of a *faux-pas*, and could neither pity nor sympathise with those who had been.

The dinner was rather solemn and cold on Christmas-day, though Sir Edward did his best; and the party broke up about eleven.

"This is flat enough," said Sir Edward, as the Colonel and the Major left together. "I have no doubt they are excellent men, both of them; but they are not the sort of birds that amuse me."

"Their notes are none of the liveliest, I own," observed Miss Lucy; "but I know papa has a great respect for them both as admirable officers."

“ You have no idea how different they are to Lord Swainton,” said Miss Charlotte, addressing herself to Lucy.

“ Ah ! and to the Honourable Felix Montague,” observed Miss Sophia. “ Oh ! what a difference ! But I do not believe there are two Sir Felix’s in the world.”

“ Smitten, — quite smitten ! ” said Sir Edward ; to which Sophia only deigned to reply,

“ Edward, you are a great plague.”

The next day was devoted to shop visiting, to purchases, to orders to tailors and milliners, to preparations for his lordship, to visits to the libraries, and to a variety of miscellaneous arrangements which are quite indispensable when three young ladies and a gentleman, abundantly supplied with health, money, good spirits, and a determination to be gay and fashionable, first settle down for a season at Bath. All their orders were on a most costly scale ; and, as far as a lavish display of wealth could secure importance, everything that could be done was effected. In one word, all Bath soon knew they had arrived, and would be fashionable.

But it is now time to return to Lord Swainton. We have said that he rose early on the morning after Christmas-day. He did so, to proceed to the Post-office, in order to procure the letter he expected, since, as it was directed, not to himself, but to William Gurney, Esq. he could not send his courier for it.

“I think you have a letter for me?” said his lordship, to the same youth to whom he had given a sovereign.

“Yes, I have, sir,” was his reply; “it arrived yesterday, and if I had known where you lodged, I would have sent it up to you.”

“Oh! it’s of no importance,” said his lordship, turning on his heel.

“Of no importance!” muttered Lord Swainton to himself; “of no importance! That was a fib, and a most unnecessary one; for, if this letter be of no importance, I don’t know what letter can be.” So he burst open the seal.

“Admirable! capital! famous! glorious! beggars description!” and then his lordship read the letter again. “I must go off to Bath at once,” continued Lord Swainton, talking to

himself as fast as he could, and without intermission. —“ Strike the iron while it’s hot ! and before some scoundrel or other at Bath may attack my reputation before Sir Edward. The master of the ceremonies is a good sort of fellow, and owes me no grudge,—indeed, he speaks ill of no one,—but if he should happen to meet with some of my play creditors, there would be a pretty kettle of fish. Beggars description !”

But what was to be done respecting Captain Smallman ? He was waiting for orders at the Swan Inn, at Blackly, and was either to come to Warnstable as a candidate, or as a friend and visitor ; but now his lordship required him in neither capacity, as he longed to arrive at Bath, and secure in his own hands the 3000*l*.

“ I know what to do,” said his lordship ; “ send him a 5*l*. note by my courier, who can go there and back on horseback whilst I am arranging for departure, and writing to Bath, London, and so forth.”

This plan was carried into effect much to Captain Smallman’s satisfaction. Lord Swain-ton wrote three lines to Sir Edward, “ just to say that he should leave Warnstable that after-

noon, after having made all the necessary arrangements for his election ; and that, although it would not be very legal to do so, he might begin beforehand in preparing his franks for the ladies, for that his election was safe." Then, in a postscript he added, " I have advanced 1500*l.* for you to the agent, to make assurance doubly sure."

Once more Lord Swainton started for Bath, —once more rattled along the road,—and once more entered that charming city, and drove up immediately, at five o'clock, to Sir Edward Clapperton's in Milsom Street. No reception could be more flattering, no cordiality more sincere; and his lordship was scarcely in his room arranging his toilet for dinner, when the west-end servant of Sir Edward brought up a box, very heavy, and with a key wrapped up in a note from Sir Edward, expressing how grateful he was to his lordship for having advanced the 1500*l.* at Warnstable, and with what pleasure and thankfulness he returned that sum, and accompanied it with 1500*l.* more, making the total sum of 6000*l.* for the whole expenses of the approaching election.

“Beggars description !” said his lordship ;
beggars description ! This is admirable !”
And taking up the box, opening it, examining its contents, and feasting his eyes for ten minutes on 3000 more sovereigns in gold ; standing bolt upright, he exclaimed, over and over and over again, “ Admirable ! wonderful ! beggars description !”

“ My lord,” said the west-end servant, knocking at Lord Swainton’s door, “ Sir Edward has begged me to remind you that the dinner hour has arrived, but, as perhaps your lordship is fatigued, you might like it postponed.”

“ By no means,” said his lordship. “ I shall join your master and the ladies in five minutes.”

His lordship looked admirably, and who does not when he is as happy as was Lord Swainton, when he entered the drawing-room ? The ladies were, of course, “ angels !” the house “ splendid !” and their warm reception “ *accablé’d* him,” he confessed, laying great emphasis on the French word. They all laughed heartily and sat down to dinner, the account of which must be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Good Shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

—It is to be made all of sighs and tears ;

It is to be made all of faith and service ;

It is to be all made of fantasy,

All made of passion, and all made of wishes ;

All adoration, duty, and obedience ;

All humbleness, all patience, all impatience,

All poverty, all trial, all observance.

SHAKSPEARE.

NEVER was a merrier dinner party than this ; Lord Swainton felt relieved of such a weight of cares by relieving his host from a weight of gold, that he indulged in all the buoyancy of his extraordinary character, and made the ladies, and especially Miss Lucy, laugh so heartily, that she more than once entreated him to forbear. The descriptions he gave of the family of the Morbleus, and the satires he poured forth on young misses who cannot speak, and especially on Miss Morbleu, who, by her perti-

nacious silence had exceedingly provoked him, resisting, as she did, all his jokes and all his puns,—good, bad, and indifferent,—were irresistibly comic. The following is one of the scenes which he gave, most graphically adapting his manner, physiognomy, and voice to each sentence. It was a dinner-scene at Sir Oscar's, when he sat opposite to “the miss of the establishment.”

LORD SWAINTON.—I shall have great pleasure in being allowed to take wine with you, Miss Morbleu.

Miss Morbleu said nothing, but bowed her head.

LORD SWAINTON.—Shall I send you hock or sherry?

Miss Morbleu looked indifferent, but seemed by her manner to point her eyes or her head rather in the direction of the hock.

LORD SWAINTON.—Then you do not decline hock, I presume? Hic, hæc, *hoc*, hujus, huic, hunc, hanc, *hock*! Ah! ah! ah! he! he! he!

MISS MORBLEU.—I beg your pardon, my lord, I have learnt Latin and got as far as *Delectus*; but hock or sherry are quite the same to me.

LORD SWAINTON (*to the servant*). Will you assist Miss Morbleu to hock?

MISS MORBLEU bowed very crookedly towards the right ear, contrary to the usual and established custom in such cases, of bowing to the left.

LORD SWAINTON.—*Delectus est buvere vinum avec mulier.**

MISS MORBLEU.—I am not so far advanced as that, my lord. I have been told that Mulier is a fine author.

LORD SWAINTON.—And authoress, too, Miss Morbleu, sometimes.

MISS MORBLEU.—Indeed, my lord! Are they married, then?

LORD SWAINTON.—Who married, Miss Morbleu?

MISS MORBLEU.—I thought you spoke of a Mrs. Mulier, and I had only heard of a Mr. Mulier.†

LORD SWAINTON.—I am not aware whether

* Lord Swainton was a better scholar than this, but he was resolved on having a joke at the expense of Miss Morbleu's Latin. He intended to say, "How delightful it is to take wine with a lady."

† *i. e.* Moliere.

they were married or not; but it is probable so agreeable a person did not long remain single. Ladies seldom do under such circumstances. And, turning to Lady Morbleu, he asked permission to take wine with her.

MISS MORBLEU.—I think we are talking of very opposite characters.

LADY MORBLEU.—I fear my daughter has forgotten *some* of her Latin, my lord.

SIR OSCAR.—And I am sure I cannot assist her, for I have forgotten all mine these twenty years past. I know, however, that Mulier is a woman.

MISS MORBLEU.—Ah! mine was a gentleman.

LORD SWAINTON.—Your what, Miss Morbleu?

MISS MORBLEU.—I hardly know, my lord, except that you said, “It was very delightful to drink wine;” and then I understood that you made that observation from Mulier.

SIR OSCAR.—I remember, in my boyish days, translating from Mulier’s works; but whether it was Mr. Mulier or Mrs. Mulier, I cannot say.

“I could restrain myself no longer,” said his

lordship to the Miss Clappertons; “and to conceal my laughter I began to cough, placing one pocket handkerchief after another to my eyes, which so streamed with tears that you might have wrung out pails full; beggared description! One advised brandy, another Sal Volatile; Sir Oscar thought it was food which had gone down the windpipe. Miss Morbleu sat perfectly motionless; but now and then, between my fits of coughing, I heard herself and her father exchanging a few words respecting Mr. or Mrs. Mulier, for they were by no means agreed as to the sex of the party, though it was ‘a woman.’ This set me off again into new fits of laughter, which I concealed as well as I could, until after about three quarters of an hour of the most violent coughing and laughing ever heard in the history of the world and all the planets, I consoled myself with some half-cold haunch of mutton.”

“‘I hope you are better, my lord?’ said Miss Morbleu. ‘It is very unpleasant when the food goes the wrong way.’

“‘Very indeed,’ I replied, said Lord Swain-ton; and if she had uttered another syllable I should have laughed till I died.”

“ I am afraid you are a quiz,” said Lucy.

“ I know not how to quiz,” said his lordship, “ except with a quizzing glass, and this I should not have the hardihood to do when the mirror would reflect so much beauty. ‘ I think you are quizzing me,’ said Lord Morpleworth one day to me; and he was old, cross, ugly, and my second cousin. ‘ Indeed I am not, cousin,’ I replied, ‘ but every one else does.’ Ah! ah! ah! He was so angry.”

The ladies all laughed, and Sir Edward was not less amused than they.

“ I once belonged to a debating society,” said his lordship, “ when I was at Cambridge, and it was one of the most amusing things in the world. Beggars description! The oddest subjects in the world were chosen for discussion. Neither history, politics, religion, literature, the arts and sciences, poetry, sculpture, painting, music, trade, nor commerce, manufactures, agriculture, nor anything of the kind were suffered to claim our attention.”

“ Oh, then, you chose Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, mathematics, and all those dull things, to debate upon,” guessed Charlotte.

“ Not so,” said his lordship. “ Guess again.”

“ Then you discussed geology, or astronomy, or mineralogy ? ”

“ Try again,” said his lordship.

“ I have it,” said Lucy : “ natural history, my lord ? ”

“ No ; nor the history of angels, with which you must surely be well acquainted. Eh ! eh ! eh ! Guess again. Beggars description ! ”

“ It does, indeed,” said Sir Edward. “ I think, my lord, we must give it up.”

“ Yes, we give it up,” cried the ladies as well as Sir Edward ; and his lordship was requested to tell them what could have been the subjects of their debates.

“ I will give you a dozen specimens of the subjects we selected,” said his lordship ; “ but, upon one condition, and that is, that you select one of them for a debate at dessert, and that you all pledge yourselves to take a part in the discussion.”

“ I am sure I cannot,” said Charlotte.

“ Nor I,” said Sophia.

“ Oh, I could not make a speech to win a throne,” said Lucy.

“ Yet every speech of yours would win a

heart," said his lordship. "Ah! ah! ah! Eh! eh! eh! Beggars description!"

"It does, indeed," said Lucy, and she gave one of her heartiest laughs, running up and down the scale with incredible rapidity.

"But do tell us the subjects, my lord, I beseech you to do so," said Miss Clapperton.

"You know my conditions," replied his lordship; "are as inexorable as the electors of Warnstable are to their candidates. Ah! ah! ah! Eh! eh! eh! Beggars description!"

"Well," said Lucy, "I am dying to hear the subjects, my lord; but you know I really cannot make a speech."

"I know no such thing," replied his lordship; "music, love, soul, fire, genius, taste, imagination — all in your favour. If you cannot speak, Miss Dawson, who can?"

"Oh, that is capital!" said Lucy, with genuine sincerity. "Well, then, I will speak, *mais prenez garde*, my lord; for you know, when once you unlock a woman's tongue you cannot chain it again."

"And who do you think would chain your tongue?" asked his lordship;—"or rather, who would not be chained by it?"

Lucy laughed, for she never took compliments in any other light than either as good or bad jokes, accordingly as they were uttered.

“ Well, Miss Charlotte,” inquired his lordship, “ you have heard what your fair friend says : will you also do your best,—and that will be good indeed,—in the shape of a speech ? I once dined at Lady Mary Sandgate’s, where there were all the Hebes, Floras, and Venuses of creation. Never was there such an assemblage of beauty since I was born !—and I made a similar proposition to that I now make here, at your hospitable board, Sir Edward, and the ladies were so taken with the idea, that we began the debate at nine in the evening and did not close it till seven the next morning. Ten hours’ debate. Beggared description !”

“ Well,” said Charlotte, “ I will promise to do my best.”

“ And I, too,” said Sophia.

“ And I must not be behindhand,” added Sir Edward, “ and so your party is complete, my lord ; and now for the subjects.”

“ It will be good practice for you, Sir Edward,” replied his lordship ; “ such debates may prepare you for Saint Stephen’s.”

“And for the hustings,” said Sir Edward, “or the borough hall.”

“Well,” said his lordship, “now there are just five of us. Two must advocate one side of the question—two the other—and one must be president.”

“Oh, I’ll be president,” said Charlotte, “for then I shall not have to speak.”

“Don’t fall into that error,” replied Lord Swainton; “for the president will have to give, in the first place, a general view of the subject under discussion; and then, at the close, present a *résumé* of the whole debate.”

“Oh then, *you* must be president, my lord,” said Sophia.

“Yes, yes, Lord Swainton president! — Voted by acclamations!” cried the merry party; and his lordship was called to the chair.

“Now then,” said his lordship, “the president must have pens, ink, and paper, and a little hammer or bell to preserve order; for though there are four belles present, I want a *ringing* bell. Ah! ah! ah!”

His lordship, on being provided with the materials he wanted, then wrote a list of the

subjects which he remembered to have been discussed by his Cambridge club of Odd Fellows, and from which the party present were to select one for the evening's debate. If the votes were equal, the president was to have the casting voice.

LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR DEBATE AT
MILSOM HALL.

1st.—Why are cat's eyes green in the dark?

2nd.—Why are sea-gulls called Mother Carey's chickens?

3rd.—Why was Tenterden steeple the cause of Goodwin Sands?

4th.—Why do we generally go to sleep on our left side?

5th.—Whose hair is most frequently grey, that of the ladies or the gentlemen?

6th.—At what age are spinsters entitled to the epithet of old maids?

7th.—When is an unmarried man to be regarded as an old bachelor?

8th.—Why did Monboddo say that men were monkeys with their tails cut off?

9th.—What is it to "fall" into love?

10th.—Why is beer of better flavour out of pewter ?

11th.—Why are green glasses used only for Bucellas, Hock, and Moselle ?

12th.—Why do the Chinese love birds-nest soup ?

“ What a droll list,” said Lucy, as she passed it, after having read it over, to Miss Clapperton : “ I know which I shall choose.”

“ And so do I,” said Miss Clapperton, as she handed it to Sophia.

“ Well I cannot so soon determine, for I am embarrassed between three of them,” said Sophia ; “ but tell me, Edward, which do you select ? ”

Sir Edward whispered in the ear of Sophia, when he had examined the list ; “ I shall vote for No. 9.”

So the votes were given as follows :—

Lucy, for No. 6.

Charlotte, for No. 7.

Sophia, for No. 9.

And Sir Edward, for the same number.

“ No. 9 is the subject for discussion, ladies and Sir Edward,” said his lordship. “ Allow me to read it in your hearing.”

“ What is it to FALL into love ? ”

“ LADIES AND SIR EDWARD,

“ Elected by your unanimous suffrages to the high and responsible office of President of the Milsom Hall Debating Club, allow me, in the first place, to thank you for this proof of your respect, (turning to Sir Edward,) and of your love,” (turning to the ladies).

“ No, not love,” said Lucy ; “ but respect and admiration.”

“ Beggars description ! ” replied his lordship ; “ I am respected and admired — but not loved. More of that anon.” And then his lordship continued his speech.

“ And now having congratulated myself on your respect and admiration, allow me to felicitate you on the brilliant and numerous assembly of rank, beauty, and fashion I see before me. Who can wonder, however, that when Sir Edward Clapperton, the able and independent member for Warnstable, is our host, all should rush at his bidding to this animated scene ? (The Ladies,” said Lord Swainton, in an under tone, “ pray be so good as to wave your handkerchiefs in token of animated applause.” This request was immedi-

ately complied with, and the sweetest odours perfumed the room. Lord Swainton again resumed.

“ But it is my duty to direct your attention to the subject chosen for this evening’s discussion, which is one full of interest, instruction, and romance.

“ The subject is love : not your love (looking at Sir Edward), nor my love (regarding in their turn all the three ladies), but Love ! Not the God of Love, though he is a most bewitching fellow ! nor yet Miss Love, though she is seraphic and sublime ! nor yet the Loves of the Angels, though Tom Moore surprised the Persians themselves with that poem, which is now translated and sung by those of whom he wrote ! But the subject is ‘ love.’ The abstract principle, ‘ love,’ that sweetest of all words in any language. But this is not all ; not only are we called upon to dwell with rapture on the word ‘ love ;’ but we are invited to consider the ‘ falling’ into love, or the being drowned in love — or the first and sudden impulse of love — or the being over head and ears in love — or the having one’s brain turned with love — or the becoming in love

without being a voluntary agent—or the being absorbed by love so as not to know the difference between a cow and a cabbage-stalk, or the being so occupied with the love of an object as to walk over a cliff of some three hundred feet high into the sea, and be literally drowned without knowing it, or, mistaking your mistress's eyes for fixed stars, and looking at them through a night telescope. These are some of the ablest and most modern definitions of the *material* school; but then come the other class of thinkers, of the *imaginative* school; and they differ. In their opinion, to 'fall into love,' means to become love; to be love itself; just as fresh water falling into the sea would soon be part of the sea, and become salt water: two beauteous principles blended into one. These philosophers maintain that when a man falls into love, a sort of transmigration takes place, by which the heart of one being takes possession of the body and soul of the person he loves, so that their affections become united as one spirit: a process of moral alchymy reduces both their systems, by a series of incomprehensible affinities, to one essence, a moral substance, called Love. These are, as you

are no doubt well aware, the two great contending systems on this all-important subject; but I feel that I am trespassing on your time, and since our honourable host has had, as I am informed, some experience on this head, I invite him to commence the evening's discussions." ("Bravo! bravo!" said the ladies; and this time they did not forget to wave their handkerchiefs.)

"My lord,—the President,—and ladies," said Sir Edward, "I am an advocate for the material, not the metaphysical or imaginative view of this question. Far be it from me to say that there is not much imagination in the love of some persons; but I submit, that they soar into love, fly into love, spring into love, but never fall into love. It is the falling into love which strikes me as being essentially, indispensably material. When some bewitching creature is first seen by you at a private ball, on a race-ground, at a theatre, on a public walk, or in assembly-rooms,—or, in fact, anywhere; and although you have most important duties to attend to, journeys to undertake, books to write, or perchance (smiling at his lordship), even a contested elec-

tion to prepare for ;—if, I say, the impression produced on you is so great, so overpowering, that business, books, pleasures, amusements, and politics, all must be forsaken, and all are forsaken by you, to watch even the smoke proceeding from the chimney of the palace or cottage, hall or humble dwelling where your charmer resides ; and if neither the enjoyments of the turf, of the theatre, of the table, of gaming, of literature, nor of polite society, have no longer any attraction for you, because the idol of your soul is as yet unspoken to, unasked, unwooed,—and because you know not how to succeed in placing a letter in her hand, or in throwing yourself at her feet, remain in doubt whether she will bid you rise and live, or sink and die ;—that is what I call falling into love. Forbid it, O ye graces and ye muses, ye goddesses and ye cherubs, that such should ever be my awful destiny ; but if, indeed, my prayers are not to be granted, if this fall is to be mine, oh, let me fall as softly and as surely as may be ! Let, I pray you, the fair one hold me not a slave ! Grant that at once she may set me free, and assure me that she hath fallen in love with me ; and that thus, imaginatively, our

natures may be one !” (The ladies were vehement in their applause of Sir Edward, though they did not all approve his doctrines, or adopt his views.)

“ *Seniores priores*,” said his lordship ; “ which means that Miss Charlotte Clapperton, as the elder sister, is now requested to address the meeting.”

“ My lord,” said Charlotte, with an air of assumed dignity, which she sustained well, “ differing, as I do, wholly and entirely from the last speaker, I confess that I am an advocate of the imaginative school. No, my lord, I cannot accept the definition given by the last speaker. My view of falling into love is far different. It is more ethereal ; it requires not the foreign aid of ornament ; it needs no letter to convey its meaning, no cottage or palace smoke to serve as a signal to its flames,—but is the pure sentiment of a pure mind. When a woman falls into love, my lord, she keeps her own secret, allows ‘ concealment, like a worm i’ the bud, to prey on her damask cheek ;’—she tells it not,—she conceals it even from herself,—she feasts on it in her imagination,—but she needs no personal presence or representation to

excite her sympathies or to rouse her heart. She reads a splendid poem; she falls into love with the author, whom she will probably never see; but she carries her love of him to the tomb. She reads a novel,—she is captivated with the hero of the tale,—she falls in love with him; but the hero may never have existed. For myself, I have fallen in love with Jupiter; I mean the planet Jupiter. I know not if ever I shall see his beauteous eyes again; but I hope I shall. Still, whether I do or not, my heart is his. This is imagination, you will tell me. I know it; and this is precisely what is meant by falling into love. The last speaker alluded to material objects. He spoke of balls, race-grounds, theatres, and public walks. Such a ‘faller into love’ as that gentleman, would fall in love with a new waltz, with the winning horse, on which he had bet thousands, and succeeded,—with a scene in an opera, or with some favourite oak in a public park or promenade. Away with such fallings into love as this! I, on the contrary, have fallen into love with the blue sky of Italy, on which these mortal eyes will probably never gaze; with the shores of the south, which it is not likely

I shall ever tread; with Venus, who never lived; and with Apollo, who never played. I have fallen into love with all; but I cannot fall into love with that which I touch, see, handle, know, and can every moment examine. No! I walk into love with these, and very often indeed walk back again. This is my opinion.” (Very long and vehement cheering followed this truly able and witty speech; and Miss Clapperton was congratulated by both her male and female co-members on her triumphant *début*.)

When the applause and excitement had subsided the president invited Miss Lucy Dawson to favour the meeting with her opinions.

“ My lord,” exclaimed Miss Lucy, with an air of affected astonishment, “ I really am surprised at the confusion of terms by the last lady-speaker. What, my lord! and brother and sister members, are we to be told that a book is not material? that the planet Jupiter is not material? that the blue sky of Italy is not material? that the shores of the south are not material? and that Venus, with her mirror, and Apollo with his lyre, were not material? It is impossible, my lord, to listen to such

absurdities as these without feeling one's blood curdle, and one's whole system revolt ! How different is my system, and that of my honourable friend the member for Warnstable ! We are perfectly consistent. Our theory and our practice go hand-in-hand. When I see a nice, clean, dapper, well-powdered, respectable man, dressed all in black (that is essential, for I never could fall in love with a man who was not wholly and always dressed in black), about fifty to sixty years of age, with somewhat of a pale appearance, indicating asthma, and yet with undoubted testimonials as to character, virtue, and, above all, wealth ; when I see such a man full of gold and silver, bank-notes, and bank-stock, riding in a carriage all by himself, whilst I am walking down the Clapham-road, with the servant or a friend, on a beautiful, broiling hot, dusty day, then, my lord and fellow-members, I have no hesitation in falling into love with such a character. Of course, I presume him to be a bachelor. Of course, I presume that he says to me, ' Divine creature ! you are mistress, if you will, of my fortune, my carriage, my farms, my woods, my groves, my piano, my harp, my all !'

and that I say to him (not meaning it), ‘Oh, you tiresome old fellow, how can you think I will marry you!’ Further, I presuppose that he insists and implores, and prays and entreats; and then that I marry him; and next that he shall die at the end of six months, of his most terrible asthma; and then, that I shall have everything left me, and be appointed sole executrix. Then, indeed, I should fall in love with such a man, and would never have his portrait removed from the dining-room as long as I lived. I might, indeed, follow up my delineation further. I might say: and then, after I had buried my beloved husband a year, and had made myself fully acquainted with the extent of my wealth, I might fall in love with a man who was without a farthing, but with a splendid title, agreeable manners, noble name, chivalrous conduct, and gentlemanly and fashionable tastes, and marry him in spite of his poverty or his age. Such a man I might fall in love with, but with no other. Now, both of these are cases of material love; and this is the system I adopt and prefer.”

“Bravo! Bravo! Bravissimo!” cried Lord Swainton. “This beggars description! The

best speeches I ever heard in my life are those I have listened to this evening."

The other members were also warm in their eulogies. When silence was again restored, the president called on Miss Sophia Clapperton, who began as follows :—

“ ‘Oh, ’tis love, ’tis love, ’tis love
Which makes the world go round.’ ”

“ But not materially so, my lord and you ladies and Sir Edward. We all know that this is not affected by love, but by the laws of nature ; and even the lady-speaker who has preceded me, with all her love of gold, carriages, powdered wigs, and old gentlemen, would surely not maintain that love meant the laws of nature. No, Mr. President, let us not be led astray by such sophisms as those of the first and third speaker, but let us rather follow the happy inspirations of the second. It is needless, then, that I should inform you that I belong to the imaginative school. A crust of oaten bread, a few cresses from the limpid spring, the dew of heaven to slake my thirst, and a stone covered with moss for my pillow, are sufficient for my material frame. I fall into love with the being who lives on nature, whose soul feasts on ex-

change of sentiments and of tastes — not physical tastes, but the tastes of the heart. I fall into love with the being whose soul is poetry and whose voice is music. Perhaps such a being I shall never see. Surely I have never seen him. But my fancy has created him; my heart has imagined him; and if he does not exist, at least I have fallen in love with him. To fall into love is not, then, the jog-trot, every-day feeling as described by the last speaker, but the soul's supreme approbation of something imaginary rather than real. The half-mad poet, who rushes from the haunts of men, and sends to some bookseller, to whom he is unknown, the lucubrations of his mind, written in a cave or a grot long ere the sun has shed his rays on the landscape around; that is the man we fall in love with, though we have never seen him. Oh, man! man! little do you know the heart of wo—man; and woe to you that you do not. As to your falling into love, I should as soon dream of a man falling upwards, falling towards the sun instead of towards the earth, if let out of a balloon, as falling in love with any one but himself. Before you can fall into love you

must know what love is, and that is only known by woman. I vote for the imaginative view of the question."

Three peals of laughter succeeded this brief but vigorous attack on that sex to which his lordship and Sir Edward belonged; and when the laughing had subsided, Lord Swainton declared that it "beggared description!" He said this four times, which meant that he was in earnest.

"Now, then, my lord," said Sir Edward, "now for your summing up."

"Oh! yes," exclaimed Charlotte, "now it's his lordship's turn."

"Silence—silence, for my lord," said Lucy, in her bewitching way; and his lordship commenced as follows:—

"When the clappers of such pretty bells demand silence, one almost regrets that silence is obtained. Such music is the most delightful I ever heard.

"The meeting of this evening has been most satisfactory. The talent which it has elicited is of the highest order, and may truly be said to 'beggard description.' I have listened in the course of my life to Burke, Pitt, Fox,

Canning, Brougham, Peel, and I know not who else besides ; but never did I hear from their lips anything surpassing the wit, poetry, imagination, and taste of our female orators. Of our good Sir Edward it is necessary to say no more than that he has indeed given fair promise for his future fame at St. Stephen's.

“But what shall I say on the subject-matter of debate? There have been two speakers on the material, and two on the imaginative side of this question. As president, I must pronounce in favour of one ; and yet how greatly am I embarrassed!

“Sir Edward has told you of bewitching creatures at private balls, race-grounds, theatre, and assembly-rooms. Oh ! how many rise before my memory,—and yet you ladies eclipse them all. This is material not imaginative—and I own I have fallen into love.”

(“Ha ! ha ! ha !” shouted Lucy, who was the very queen of laughter, as her pretty ringlets hung on either side of her head.)

“Miss Charlotte has told you of hidden love, of secret love, of the love of ideas, and of the creations of one's own imaginings ; but would not this falling into love be rather

ideal than real? And can we fall (which is a material act) into an immaterial action!

“Miss Lucy Dawson has made you smile with her notions of falling into love! but how did we all sympathize with her when she spoke of carriages, gold, estates, farms, woods, and asthmatic husbands. I only regretted that black was indispensable, for I never wear it. Ha! ha! ha! beggars description.

“Miss Sophia was eminently happy in her illustrations, though I fear her soul will be long ere it finds such another as itself; for men who fall into love generally prefer good pillows to moss stones, claret and champagne to limpid springs or the dews of heaven, and a young widow with a large estate to a pretty maiden without a shilling. And yet,

‘ Oh ’tis love, ’tis love, ’tis love,
Which makes this world go round.’

“I give the casting vote for the material view of this question. Ah! ah! ah! eh! eh! eh! beggars description!”

The ladies withdrew. The gentlemen soon joined them. It was long after one o’clock ere the party separated; and when Lord Swain-

ton gained his room, and gazed once more on the box, which he had locked up in a cupboard, with 3000 sovereigns in it, he exclaimed, with all his heart “Beggars description !” and with this phrase on his lips he went to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

“A gamester, the greater master he is in his art, the worse man he is.”

THE next morning the breakfast-table was surrounded at ten o'clock. After breakfast was over, Lord Swainton proposed “that they should get to business,” and the ladies offered to retire. But his lordship, who knew well how good a thing it was to have ladies *with* you on all occasions, and how much depends on their espousing your cause, invited them to remain. Sir Edward, however, made a well-understood sign to Sophia, to leave the room with Lucy, as he had no desire to talk about Warnstable before her.

“Oh ! they are only going to talk politics,” said Sophia to Lucy, “and that will not

amuse us. Charlotte, perhaps, will remain, but come you with me, and let us practise our new duet."

"With all my heart," replied Lucy; "good day, amiable trio of stern politicians."

"Sweet girl, lovely creature, angelic simplicity, beggars description!" said his lordship, as Lucy left the room.

"Well, Sir Edward," continued his lordship, "all looks prosperous at Warnstable. A man of a little influence in those parts, my old friend Captain Smallman, had some notion of starting. As soon as I learned it, I proceeded to Exeter, convinced him that a Whig candidate would have no chances in the borough—paid some expenses he had incurred—and obtained his promise not to proceed further."

"Did you, indeed?" said Miss Charlotte; "really, my lord you must allow me to express how truly sensible we all are of your lordship's kindness; such disinterestedness and devotedness are indeed, rare."

"Say nothing about that, I beg of you; for my part, I feel that all the obligations are on the other side."

“Oh! that is really too much,” replied Sir Edward; “I only regret that I have no possible means of showing my gratitude to your lordship.”

“Well, but let me tell you what I have done,” said Lord Swainton, who then pulled out of his side coat-pocket a mass of foolscap paper, on which were written the address of Sir Oscar to his constituents containing his resignation; the letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer applying for the Chiltern Hundreds; and a request to the Home Secretary to move for a new writ for the Borough of Warnstable. Besides this, his lordship had drawn out for Sir Edward Clapperton an address to the electors, also advertisements and leading articles for the provincial papers, and paragraphs or puffs for the London Press. In fact all was, “cut and dried;” and as his lordship had ascertained from the landlord of the hotel, and agent at the borough in question, what were his opinions and those of the majority of electors on all leading questions, he had taken care to frame Sir Edward’s address so as to meet all possible contingencies. It was as follows:—

“ TO THE WORTHY AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS
OF THE BOROUGH OF WARNSTABLE.

“ THE resignation of your late esteemed and respected representative, Sir Oscar Morbleu, has once more led to a vacancy in your ancient and truly patriotic borough. Again are you called on to tread in the steps of your illustrious ancestors, from the period of Athelstan and Henry I. downwards, and to select a representative in parliament. I hasten to offer myself for that honour. Possessed of ample fortune, health, and a desire to serve my country and promote the good old cause of Church and King, Church and State, I flatter myself that I shall not prove myself unworthy of your choice. Brought up a merchant and manufacturer, I understand your local interests, and shall know how to defend them. Your port needs improving, and it shall be improved. Your theatre needs ornamenting, and I will never have it said that a town, distinguished as the birth-place of an author, of a poet, and a dramatist, shall have a theatre

unworthy of itself. Your woollen-trade must be revived. Your baize, silk-stocking, and waistcoat manufactories must be encouraged. Your new member must patronize your balls, give new life to your select and admirable society, and support all the charitable institutions of your town.

“ But besides this, he will defend the throne, oppose all wild and mad schemes of change, under the name of ‘reform,’ endeavour to obtain the repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Bill, call for new protection to our foreign trade, and for a reduction on the duty upon foreign corn. We must have cheap bread, cheap custom duties, and foreign markets and ports opened to us in every direction.

“ But above and before all things, I will defend your ancient privileges and hereditary rights. I will assert on all occasions the purity, patriotism, primitive privileges, and piety of the electors of Warnstable; and no one shall ever dare to attempt to deprive you of your old and dear franchises.

“ The corn-laws must be revised; commercial treaties must be signed with foreign powers; the Church must be defended, that ancient

and best barrier of all our most sacred rights ; and, in one word, I will seek to preserve to you and to the country all that is good and valuable in our most glorious constitution, at the same time joining the government in any prudent measures it may propose, provided they are such as will conduce to your advantage,

“ I have the honour to remain,

“ Gentlemen,

“ Your devoted, obedient and very humble
servant,

“ E. CLAPPERTON, Bart.”

“ Clapham Hall, London.”

“ Will that do ? ” asked his lordship, as he concluded reading the address.

“ I think it will indeed ! ” replied Sir Edward.

“ Oh, it ’s admirable ! ” exclaimed Miss Charlotte ; “ really admirable ! ”

“ There is one point, however,” said Sir Edward, “ on which I should like to have your opinion, my lord, and that is, about decorating the theatre ; do you not think that looks something like bribery ? Besides which, the expense might be considerable.”

“ You can do it for five hundred pounds, Sir Edward ; that small expense will secure your seat for life ; not for one parliament only, but for life, or until you may be raised to the peerage. The fact is, that the Warnstable people are very fond of theatrical amusements, and if you only please them in this matter your popularity will be greater than that of any man ever known there before. Beggars description ! ”

“ But do you not think it would be bribery to say so beforehand ? Do it, if you will, but say nothing about it in the address.”

“ You are wrong, Sir Edward ! At all events, promise it, and we can afterwards consult Serjeant Sadface on the question.”

“ Should we not consult him at once, then, my lord, whether it be bribery or not, since, what once I have promised I must fulfil ? ”

“ O fiddle-de-dee,” said his lordship. “ Election promises are like pie-crust, Sir Edward, made to be broken.”

Sir Edward looked as if he was not of this opinion, but said no more, as his lordship promised to consult Serjeant Sadface the next week.

“And now I must take leave of you for the rest of the day until dinner-time,” said his lordship. “I have many calls to make; and as we have had a heavy fall of snow I shall have some difficulty in climbing about.”

“My carriage is at your service,” replied Sir Edward.

His lordship declined the offer, with many thanks, as he knew full well that he had to climb up streets too steep to allow a carriage to pass.

Lord Swainton’s visits were to his play-creditors. He started with 200*l.* in his pocket, and he expected to return without a shilling. He owed 300*l.* in all; but he had not the heart to pay all the same day. He called on a Colonel Shortpoint, who had sworn to insult him in the Pump-room publicly if he did not pay him the 60*l.* he owed him. The interview was short and striking.

LORD SWAINTON.—Shortpoint, I think I owe you a trifle?

SHORTPOINT.—I *know* you do.

LORD SWAINTON.—How much is it?

SHORTPOINT.—60*l.*; but I’ll let you off with 50*l.*, money down, and no bills.

LORD SWAINTON.—Here they are, throwing the 50 sovereigns on the table.

SHORTPOINT.—My dear Swainton, how long have you been at Bath ?

LORD SWAINTON.—Twenty-four hours.

SHORTPOINT.—When will you come and see me ?

LORD SWAINTON.—I have come now ; but I must take my leave, for I have other visits to make.

SHORTPOINT. — I always said you were an honourable fellow, and would pay.

LORD SWAINTON.—Not always, I think ; but never mind ; beggars description !

The next play-creditor he called upon was Captain Oblivious ; who always forgot when he lost, but was most inexorable when he won. No one had spoken so ill of Lord Swainton in Bath as he had.

LORD SWAINTON.—I've just looked in to pay you the 15*l*. I owe you, Captain, and to renew our acquaintance.

CAPTAIN.—Oh ! my dear Swainton, I am sorry you should have given yourself so much trouble as to think of me, I had quite for-

gotten you owed me anything, and, if even I had remembered it, I should have thought it quite as safe in your hands as in mine.

LORD SWAINTON.—Who is here, just now ? I am down with a sort of city man and his family ; good kind of people enough,—rich, generous, and so on ;—but who's here ?

CAPTAIN.—Why, your terrible foe, Lady Muchberry.

LORD SWAINTON.—Is she, indeed ?

CAPTAIN.—I heard her say that young Clapperton in Milsom Street, who has just come down, was a friend of yours, and that she would take good care to set him against you. I fancy you owe her a trifle, and some one or other told her that you denied it ; this has made her very spiteful. She says you owe her 40*l*. I would advise you to settle the matter, for she might annoy you.

“Thank you, thank you !” said his lordship, and he then took leave of the Captain.

“My lady,” said Lord Swainton, who met her at the door, just stepping into her carriage to make a call at Sir Edward Clapperton's, though the streets were slippery and the wind

cold, "I have just called to give the lie to some impudent fellow, who, I understand, said that I did not owe your ladyship 40*l.*; and the best way of giving him the lie is to pay my debt;" at the same time handing over that sum in gold.

"Oh, my lord," replied Lady Muchberry, "I never believed the man who told me so. I knew you would pay me. We are all pinched in our turns. I have lost a great deal lately, and this sum, small though it be, is very acceptable for some of the dirty tradesmen's bills. Which way are you going? By the bye, I am going to call on some friends of yours, the Miss Clappertons. They tell me that they are very nice people. I once met their father at Sir Charles Stilton's at Still Hill. Are you going that way?"

"Yes, I am," replied his lordship, "and will accompany you to their house. They are nice artless girls, very fond of life, and wish to be introduced into society, and all that sort of thing. No one can be of more use to them than your ladyship."

"Say, rather, than yourself, my lord, for

I really should not have thought of calling on them, had not some one told me you knew them, and that was a guarantee to me that they were *comme il faut*."

"A precious mess I've escaped," said Lord Swainton, to himself; "two minutes, nay one minute later, and I should have been ruined. As sure as the sun is the sun, he would have given up all idea of the borough, and insisted on the return of the second 3000*l*; beggars description!"

"Will you allow me to introduce your ladyship to Sir Edward and the Miss Clapper-tons?" asked his lordship in his most winning way.

"Will I allow you, indeed?" replied her ladyship; "why what could be more gratifying to my feelings than to be so introduced? I am sure I shall be greatly indebted to you."

The carriage of Lady Muchberry drove up to the door of Sir Edward, and Lord Swainton assisted her ladyship to alight.

"Ladies, I have the high honour, and the great gratification of presenting to you my valued and highly-esteemed friend, Lady

Muchberry, the life, soul, and admiration of the best society in Bath, and not only in Bath, but in every place that she condescends to enliven by her presence."

"Young ladies," said Lady Muchberry, "don't you believe his lordship; he is much too good, too kind, and too indulgent. You are fortunate, indeed, in having him for your *chaperon*, for when he is not in Bath, we are as dull as you would be without your beaux."

The young ladies smiled, Sir Edward felt delighted; he had often heard of Lady Muchberry, and his father, who had seen her once at Still Hill, had always spoken of her afterwards as the most fashionable woman he ever saw; and there she was before him.

"I once met your father at my old friend's, Sir Charles Stilton's, Sir Edward," said her ladyship.

"My father frequently spoke of that day with delight," replied Sir Edward.

"Oh, yes, Lady Muchberry," said Miss Charlotte; "I well remember your name, and feel much honoured by your visit."

A few more civilities were exchanged.

Lady Muchberry "would be most happy to do all that could be agreeable to them at Bath;" and then Sir Edward and Lord Swainton both accompanied her to her carriage. The former returned to his sisters, but his lordship entered the carriage with her, and "begged for another lift."

"Charming woman," said Miss Charlotte.

"And so fashionable," said Miss Sophia.

"And so obliging," added Miss Lucy.

"Yes, it is very agreeable to come out under such patronage as that of Lady Muchberry and Lord Swainton."

"It is, indeed," said the three young ladies, simultaneously.

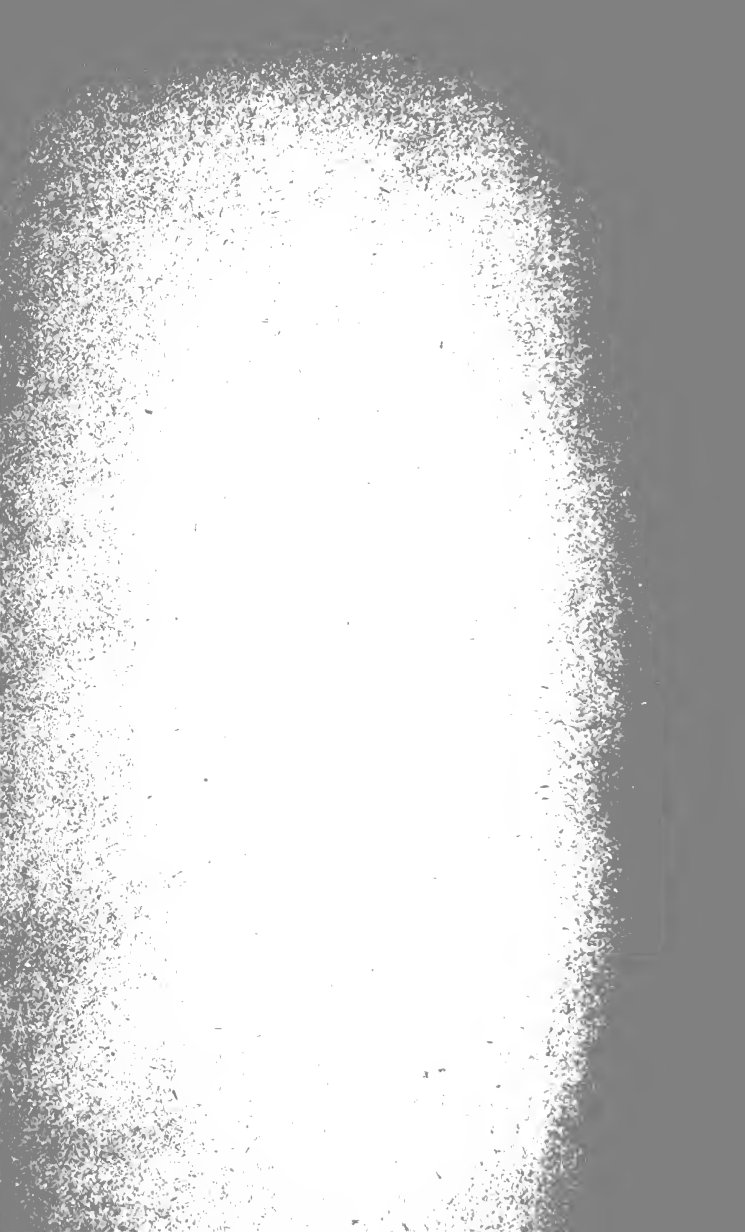
Lord Swainton being now perfectly reconciled to Lady Muchberry, and knowing her strong partiality to good dinners, excellent wines, and the *ne plus ultra* of liqueurs, "hoped she would dine at the Clappertons before he left for London;" and her ladyship requested him "to manage that with his usual talent and amiability."

His lordship then took leave of her, visited the rest of his play-creditors, found them all at home, made his peace with every one who

could have injured him, dined with joy and in high spirits at the Clappertons, and felt more at ease than he had done for the last five years.

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